A DAUGHTER OF EVE By Frank Harris

Ainslee's

SEPT. 1926
25 CTS.

Katherine Mansfield, Stacy Aumonier, Maurice Hewlett, O. Henry, Claude Farrère, Henri Murger.

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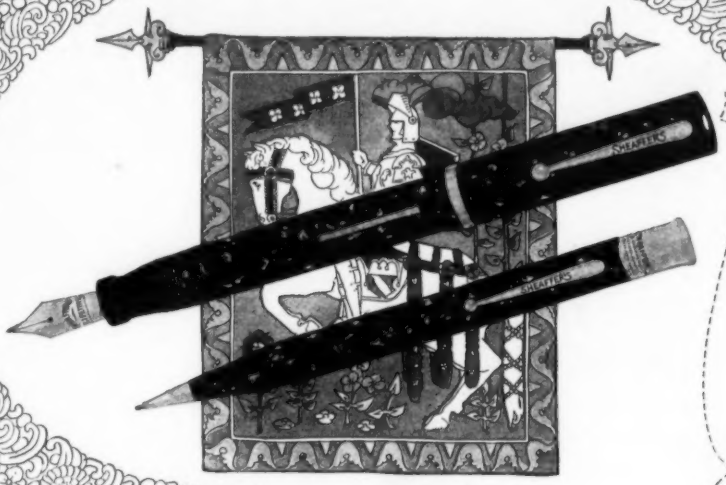

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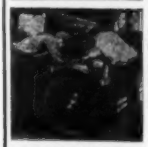

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Vol. LVIII No. 1

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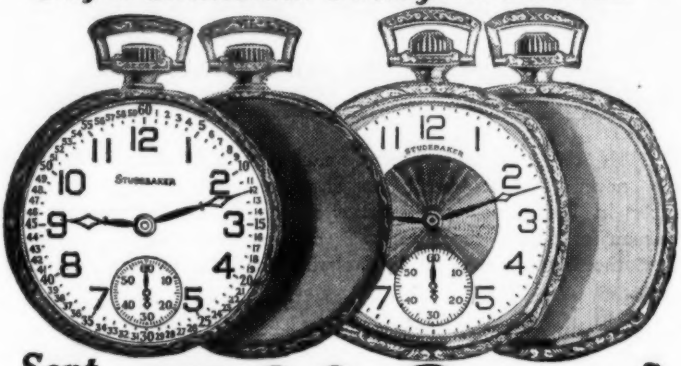

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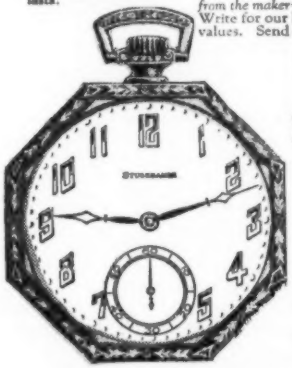

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GOOD READING

BY

CHARLES HOUSTON

CERTAIN things there are that can never be set down on paper in black and white—the love of a man for a maid, the secret of personality, the whole matter of likes and dislikes.

To be sure, you can catch hints of them and the other elusive things of life from what the writers and scholars tell us, but in the long run, all we can say for sure is to repeat the remark of the old lady who said, "There's no accounting for tastes," what time she kissed the cow.

Just why is it that since the beginning of time the story-teller has been sought after by all manner of men and women? Why is the game of make-believe the one universal game the world over, played by the black man of Africa squatting before his hut to hear the folk-lore of his tribe, and the sophisticated American picking his favorite fiction magazine from the news stand? Because fiction is so vital a part of the full life that all-around Americans are eager to live, the making of it has become a genuine service.

One of the oldest and best-established publishing houses in the country to specialize in the making of good fiction is Chelsea House, at Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street, New York City. The fiction which it procures from masters of their craft covers a wide range, from entrancing love stories to swift-moving Western yarns. With a Chelsea House book in your hand, you can be assured that the romance you love best will come trooping through your door, and that many an hour that would otherwise be empty will be filled with the most colorful adventure.

Here are notes on some of the latest and best Chelsea House offerings, which I heartily recommend to all those who love a good story, well told.

THE TWO REDS OF TRAVOY, by Clay Perry. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price $2.

A story of the big timber in the wilds of French Canada, one of the least known and most romantic spots on the North American continent, told for all lovers of the out of doors by a writer who knows whereof he writes. Mr. Perry writes of the twins of giant build who were known as "The Two Reds," of how they came to meet city-bred Gwen Harris on her visit to Travoy, and of all the exciting adventures that happened thereafter. This is a book for a man who loves the smell of wood smoke, for a woman who can take care of herself in the open, for all those, in short, who are not city bound, but who can follow a forest trail with zest. For two dollars at your bookseller's, you can have hours of genuine pleasure from this unusual story.

QUICKSANDS, a Love Story, by Victor Thorne. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

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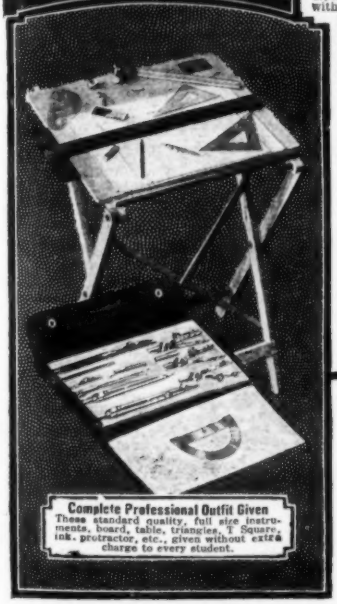
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Well, I'm not going to spoil this story for you by giving away its dénouement. Those of you who have read other books by Victor Thorne know how craftily he weaves his plots. My advice to every fiction lover is to sink at once into "Quicksands."

RED MOUNTAIN, LIMITED, an Adventure Story, by Eugene A. Clancy. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

What is real adventure, anyhow? There's a girl in this book who, after going through plenty of excitement, comes to the conclusion that adventure is "a curiously human thing; that romantic pyrotechnics and gasps and gurgles were only the high lights; that real adventure means common sense—and courage." It isn't always "looking for trouble." She comes to this conclusion "gliding through New York's night life in a cab, bound for a midnight cabaret." What happened after that would satisfy any glutton for adventure. The subsequent proceedings which have their wind-up in the Western cow town of Red Mountain will keep you right on the edge of your chair. This is an adventure story that lives up to its description, with never a dull chapter in it.

RONICKY DOONE, a Western Story, by David Manning. Published by Chelsea House, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Price 75 cents.

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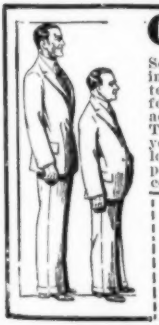

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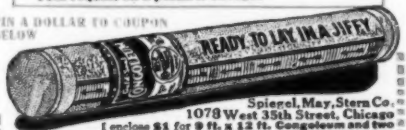

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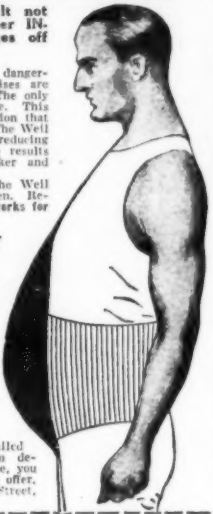

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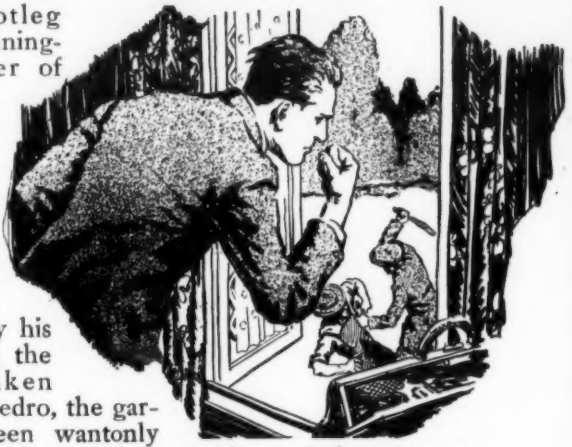

Crazed by bootleg booze, Vance Cunningham, wealthy owner of a great estate, had roused the enmity of a number of those with whom he came in contact. There was big, bronzed Jim Travis, the brother of Cunningham's wife for example, who was enraged by his sister's treatment at the hands of the drunken brute. There was Pedro, the gardener who had been wantonly assaulted by Cunningham and the butler and the secretary.

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AINSLEE'S

VOL. LVIII. SEPTEMBER, 1926. No 1

A Novelette by

Frank Harris

Author of 'Sonia' and 'First Love'

A Daughter of Eve

AN old-fashioned square house on Long Island, set in a clearing of pine trees; a break in the cliff shows a little triangle of sandy beach and the waters of the sound dancing in the moonlight. Half a dozen men are sitting about on the stoop looking over the silvery waters.

The evening papers had published an account of Mrs. Amory's will which showed that she had left half a million dollars to a nursing home for mill children in Philadelphia. The news set us all talking of the wonderful work she had done and her self-sacrifice. Most of us assumed that it was a religious motive that had induced this rich and, it was said, handsome woman to give years of her life to improving the lot of the city's waifs and strays.

The ladies had left us and gone up to bed; but we still discussed the matter. Suddenly Charlie Railton turned to Judge Barnett of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, who sat with his chair tilted back against the wall ruminating.

. . "Say, judge, what do you think of it, anyway? I'd like to hear your opinion."

"I have no opinion of the matter," replied the judge, taking the cigar out of his mouth and speaking very slowly: "I don't know women well enough to be sure about anything where they're concerned."

"Plead guilty, judge," cried Railton, who was about thirty years of age. "Plead guilty and throw yourself on the mercy of the court; I guess you know women better than most of us, and they're pretty easy to know, it seems to me."

"I used to think so, too," said the judge, "but I got kind o' puzzled once and I've never been sure since."

"How was that, judge?" cried our host, one of the boldest speculators on the New York Stock Exchange, scenting a mystery.

"It's a long story," said Barnett deliberately, "and it's pretty late already."

We all protested and called for the story and the judge began:

"It takes one a long way back, I'm afraid—back to the late sixties; and it's autobiographical, too. I guess it has every fault."

"Go on," we cried in chorus.

After being admitted to the bar—he resumed—I went up to my mother's place in Maine to rest. Along in the winter I got pneumonia on a shooting trip and could not shake it off. I crawled through the summer and then made up my mind to go to California or somewhere warm for the winter; I had had enough of snow and blizzards. I spent the winter in Santa Barbara and got as fit as a young terrier.

In the spring I went to Frisco and there in a gymnasium and boxing saloon got to know a man who was about the best athlete I ever struck. Winterstein might have been heavyweight champion if he had trained, and he was handsome enough for a stage lover. He was just under six feet in height, with bold expression and good features; dark hair in little curls all over his head and agate-dark eyes which grew black when he was excited or angry.

I found he was a better man physically than I was, and that was the beginning of our friendship; we soon became intimate and he told me all about his early life. He was born in the North of England, and became a sailor in the English navy, but he could not stand the rigid discipline, poor food, and harsh treatment. He deserted in Quebec while still a lad, and made his way to New York. He had not much education, but he had improved what he had by reading. Like most men of intelligence who have not had a college training, he set great store by books and book learning, and got me to help him with mathematics. He had a captain's certificate, it appeared, but he wanted to know navigation thoroughly; he surprised me one day by telling me he owned a little vessel which was nearly ready for sea.

"I have just had her overhauled," he said. "Would you like to come and see her? She's lying off Meiggs'."

"What do you do with her?" I questioned, full of curiosity.

"I go pearling," he said; "pearls are found nearly all round the Gulf of California. The fisher-folk rake in the oysters and lay them on the beach till they get bad and open of themselves. The children collect the pearls and keep them until I come round. I paid for the craft and have a couple of thousand dollars put by from last year's work."

"But where did you learn about pearls?" I asked.

"I worked for a man once and picked it up. Sometimes I make a little mistake, but not often. You see we go to out-of-the-way places where we reckon to give about a quarter what the pearls are worth. That leaves a wide margin for mistakes."

"But I had no idea that there were pearls in the Gulf," I said.

"Why not come along and see for yourself?" he said. "I'll be starting in a week. The schooner had to have her bottom cleaned and the copper repaired; that's what's hung me up for

this last month or so. Now I'm about right for another year. If you'd like to come, I'd be glad to have you."

"And make me mate?" I asked laughing.

"Commander," he replied seriously, "and you shall have ten per cent of the profits."

"I'll think it over and let you know," was my answer.

The adventure tempted me, the strange life and work, the novelty of the thing: I resolved to go pearling.

I went with Winterstein to the wharf and he showed his craft to me. She looked like a toy vessel, a little schooner, a fifty-footer of about forty tons. She sat on the water like a duck, a little New England model with beautiful lines. Winterstein introduced me to his first mate, Donkin, and his second mate, Crawford. Donkin was a big lump of a fellow, six feet two in height, broad in proportion and brawny, a good seaman. Crawford I soon found out was an even better sailor and more intelligent, though of only average strength.

"What about the crew?" I asked Winterstein when we were alone in the little cabin.

"I want one more man and a boy," he replied laughing at my surprised face.

"But," I retorted, "you can't have three officers and one man."

"It's like this," he said: "Donkin has only been a second mate, but he gets a first mate's certificate provided he stays with me a year, and the same thing with Crawford. The work is not hard," he added apologetically, "they get good wages and a lift in rank and it suits them, and so I get first-rate work cheap. Four or five men can manage this craft easy so long as we don't strike a cyclone, and there ain't much dirty weather in the Gulf."

A couple of days later Winterstein told me shyly that he had been married recently, and after I had congratulated him, he insisted that I must come and be introduced to the prettiest girl in California. All the way uptown he praised his young wife, and the praise I found was not extravagant. Mrs. Winterstein was charming: tall and fair with Irish gray eyes; her shyness and love of Winterstein put a sort of aureole about her. She was of Irish parentage: before her marriage her name had been Rose O'Connor. Nothing would do but I must call her Rose at once. The pair lived in a little frame house on the side of the bluff, where now there is a famous park. An old Irishwoman did the chores for Rose and mothered and scolded her just as she had done before her marriage. Rose, I learned, had been a teacher in the high school. In the next few days I saw a good deal of her. She was doing up her quarters and buying knickknacks for the cabin and tiny stateroom, and I naturally ran her errands and tried to save her trouble.

Whenever I ventured a shy compliment she always told me I must see her sister Daisy, who was at Sacramento in a finishing school. Daisy was lovely and Daisy was clever; there was no one like Daisy in her sister's eyes.

It was a perfect June morning with just air enough to make the sun dance on the ripples, when at length we were all ready on board and starting out of the bay.

Our crew had been completed by a young darky called Abraham Lincoln, who at once took over the cooking, and a sailor called Dyer, who was a little lame, but handy enough at his work.

The first part of the cruise was uneventful: it might have been a yachting trip. Day after day we sailed along in delightful sunshine, with a six or eight-knot breeze. The perfect conditions would have been monotonous had we not amused ourselves with fishing.

One day I remember we got rather rough weather and when Winterstein, Donkin and myself took our bearing next day we found that we had been swept some distance to the westward.

It was Crawford who solved the enigma for us. He told us there was a current, called the West Wind Drift, which set across the Pacific from east to west as if making for Frisco and then flows down the coast from north to south till it meets the north equatorial current which comes from the south and sweeps out to the west, carrying the tail end, so to speak, of the drift with it. Where the two opposing currents meet off the South California coast, one often finds a heavy sea and variable cross winds. But as soon as we turned into the Gulf the fine weather began again.

The trading which I had hoped would be full of adventure turned out to be quite simple and tame. We ran along the shore, stopping wherever there was a village. Usually we dropped anchor pretty close in and rowed ashore. At nine places out of ten Winterstein was known. The fishermen brought out their little cotton bags of pearls and we bought them. Curiously enough, the black pearl, so esteemed to-day, had then no value at all. Whenever we bought a packet of white pearls, the black ones were thrown in as not worth estimating. The pink pearls, too, had no price, unless they were exceptionally large or beautifully shaped, and even then they were very cheap. I began to collect the black pearls to make a necklace for Mrs. Winterstein. I was half in love with her I think from the beginning. She was not only very pretty but laughter loving, and girlish, and her little matronly airs sat drolly upon her. Every one on board liked her, I don't know why. I suppose she wanted to please us all, for she was full of consideration for every one. I have never seen any woman who appealed so unconsciously and so directly to the heart, and her happiness was something that had to be seen to be believed. She simply adored her husband, waited on him hand and foot, and pampered all his little selfishnesses. She was only unhappy when away from him, or when it was rough weather and she was seasick. Curiously enough, in spite of the long cruise, she never became a good sailor. In fine weather she was all right, but the moment *The Rose* commenced to bob about, Mrs. Winterstein used to retire to her cabin.

I told no one about the necklace. I simply annexed all the black pearls and determined to get them strung together as soon as we got back to Frisco. I never landed without asking after them, and even went so far as to buy some which were being used by the native children as trinkets. I remember once coming across an extraordinary specimen as big as a marble, perfectly round, and with a perfect skin. We were passing a cabin where a couple of mestizo girls of fourteen and sixteen were seated on the sand playing a game of bones, which I think must be as old as the world, for the Greeks knew it as astragalos. You throw the round bones up into the air and turn your hand round quickly and catch them on the back. Among the five bones was a black pearl, which I admired at once and bought for a quarter, I think. I can still see the half-naked girl-child as she handed it to me. She stood on one leg like a stork, and with her right foot rubbed her left ankle, while glancing at me half shyly out of great, liquid dark eyes. She had only a red calico wrap about ner body, but she was evidently unconscious of her nudity—a child in mind, a woman in body.

I have absolutely nothing interesting to tell of this first cruise. We stopped once where the sea must have receded from the land, for the town was some

four miles inland. I have forgotten the name of the place, but it was quite a town—some two or three thousand inhabitants. The smell of the oysters on the sea beach, I remember, was overpowering. Thousands and thousands of bushels had been left to rot. Our harvest of pearls here was so large that Winterstein resolved to go back to Frisco at once and market his goods. We were all tired of fish and biscuits, varied with sowbelly fiery with salt and black with age.

The return trip was just as uneventful as the voyage out. Winterstein's profits were beyond all his former experiences. After paying all expenses, giving me my tenth, and dividing another tenth between the two mates, he cleared up something like six thousand dollars for two months' work.

He was naturally eager to get to sea again, but there was a difficulty. Rose found that her sister had left Sacramento and had come to live in Frisco. She had got work, too, I gathered, in a shop and refused absolutely to be a schoolgirl any longer or to accept her sister's advice. Rose was anxious about her and resolved to take her on board with us the next cruise. But for a long time Miss Daisy refused to come: she preferred, it appeared, to be entirely on her own and it was only when Winterstein joined Rose in solicitation that she finally consented. I was rather eager to see this very self-willed and independent young lady.

I was quite ready for another trip. It would please my mother, I thought, if I went back with a couple of thousand dollars in my pocket, and I had got my black pearls strung as a necklace for Rose.

Winterstein warned me that the next trip would perhaps not be so profitable, as he would leave out the chief places, which he had already touched at, and go to the more remote stations.

"Pearling," he said, "is like everything else in life—the easiest work is the best paid." His philosophy was not very deep, though his observation was exact enough.

We arranged to start one afternoon. I had been in town making purchases. It was wretched weather. A nor'easter had sprung up and blew sand through the streets in clouds. I only hoped that the departure would be postponed. I found Winterstein waiting impatiently for me, and his wife's sister, too, was on deck in spite of the rough weather. Winterstein introduced me to her. Daisy O'Connor did not make much impression on me at first; she was girlish, young, and did not seem to be anything like so good looking as her sister. True, she had large, dark-brown eyes and good features, but she was smaller than Rose, and without Rose's brilliant coloring or charm of appeal. She treated me rather coolly, I thought. Winterstein seemed to be in a great hurry to get off.

"Why not put off going until to-morrow?" I asked. "As soon as we get outside she'll duck into it halfway up her jib."

"To-morrow's Friday," remarked Miss Daisy.

"Surely you're not superstitious?" I laughed.

"Yes, I am," replied the girl, and a peculiar character of decision came into her face and voice.

"You know the old rhyme?"

She questioned me with a look, and I repeated the old chanty:

> "Monday for health
> And Tuesday for wealth
> And Wednesday the best day of all,
> Thursday for losses
> And Friday for crosses
> And Saturday no day at all.

"Thursday will be a bad start," I added.

"I like a bad start," she retorted; "a good start often means a bad ending." She spoke bitterly, I thought.

"A resolute little thing," I said to myself carelessly, while getting into my sea togs

In five minutes the anchor was up and the sails set and we were beating out to sea in the teeth of the gale. In the bay the wind came in gusts, but as we held toward Lime Point it settled down to a steady drive which heeled us over till the lee scuppers were under water. Every moment it blew harder. When we went about and opened out the Golden Gate, *The Rose* went over, over till it looked as if she would turn turtle. I laid hold of the main rigging to keep my feet and get the spindrift out of my eyes. Ten feet from me was the girl with one hand on a stay, her slight figure braced against the gale, evidently enjoying the experience. A different voyage from the first, I thought to myself, and under different auspices. But the work and danger stopped thought. As soon as we were out of the Golden Gate and clear of Point Bonita the sea began to pile up and break in masses on the bar. We were in for a dirty night. In five minutes we were all wet to the skin. The girl had gone below. The companion, skylights and hatches were all battened down and made snug and not a moment too soon. The sea on the bar was terrific: again and again the green water buried the decks, but as soon as we had got outside and turned her bows southward, the gale came fair on the quarter and the little "saucer," as I called *The Rose,* made good weather of it, lifting easily to the great combers and swooping along their shoulders into the night for all the world like some white sea bird.

The coming on board of Daisy O'Connor altered everything. I was too young at the time to explain, or even understand what was taking place. The interest which used to center in Rose and Winterstein and abaft the companion, now followed Daisy all over the ship. For the girl was never long in one place and divided her favors impartially among all the men on board. Now she walked his watch talking to Crawford, or sat discussing a book with me. She was less with Winterstein than with any of us, which was not remarked, because the weather still continued boisterous and gave him a good deal to do between the stateroom in which his wife spent most of her time and the wave-swept deck.

In every way this cruise was different from the first, less pleasant, if more exciting. The first thing I noticed was that Donkin, who appeared to like Winterstein on the first voyage, now disliked him. Winterstein spoke sharply to him one day about the way the jib was sitting.

"That jib's shivering," he said; "it's not set flat; take a pull at it."

Donkin looked at him and said sulkily:

"That's because she's steered too free."

"That's all you know about it," replied Winterestein cheerfully; "at any rate take a pull at the sheet."

The look of contempt and anger which Donkin threw at the skipper surprised and shocked me. I did not even then notice that Daisy was standing to windward almost between them. It only occurred to me long afterward. *The Rose,* which had been the most comfortable craft in the world, had become an ordinary sort of vessel.

The weather was very unsettled; usually we had more than enough wind and a heavy lop of sea, and the little saucer tossed about like a cork.

Three days out of four Rose O'Connor kept to her berth, and never showed at all even at meal times, and Daisy O'Connor took her place on the deck and in the cabin as well. Day after day Winterstein and I lunched with her alone. The door leading into

Rose's stateroom was generally closed. It was impossible not to be interested in Daisy. She was very intelligent and self-centered, and as reserved as Rose was ingenuous and open. She struck me as being much older than Rose. She was a sort of enigma, and I could not help wanting to find the key to it. She never praised or complimented one as Rose did; her praise was a word or two, which seemed wrung from her—a tantalizing, proud creature.

One day we were running along under some bluffs; the wind was light and fitful; we had all the plain sails set. Rose was on deck, seated in a cane armchair to windward of the companion. Winterstein was a consummate seaman, and that day seemed a little anxious; he kept running down to look at the barometer, and had a word or two with Crawford, I remembered afterward. Neither of them seemed to like the look of the weather. I paid small attention to externals, for Daisy was walking the deck with me, and I was telling her how I intended to put up my shingle in New York that winter and start my law office. She was looking her very best and I had begun to wonder whether she was not even more attractive than her sister. When she got excited, or when the wind blew a little sharply, her white skin would take on the faint pink tinge of a sea-shell, and when interested her eyes would grow large and deepen in color. Altogether I was beginning to think her fascinating. Unconsciously I was transferring to her my old allegiance to Rose. Rose was not at her best this cruise; she looked washed out and pale; she did what she could, but the bad weather was against her. Clearly the spiritual center of gravity, so to speak, of the vessel, had changed, and I certainly was not blind to the fact that Daisy gave me more of her time than she gave to any one else, though she would often have long talks with Donkin. The person she spent least time with was distinctly Winterstein.

While we were walking up and down talking, the wind suddenly ceased, and the little craft shot up at once on an even keel and set Rose's chair sliding. It was stopped by Winterstein, who took his wife below, and as we resumed our walk again I noticed that the look Daisy threw at her sister was more than indifferent; there was contempt in it. In a minute or two Winterstein came up again and stood near the mainsheet and every now and then we passed him. The wind was blowing again steadily and the schooner heeled over under it and all went on as before. Suddenly, without any warning, the wind veered round and blew from almost the opposite point of the compass. With a slash and crash the sails came flapping over our heads and the boom smashed inboard, as if we were going to gybe. I caught the companion to hold myself. Daisy was thrown past me and would have had a nasty fall had not Winterstein caught her in his arms. She tore herself loose angrily, and he sprang to the mainsheet and drew it taut and stopped the boom from going over. The helmsman, Crawford, had been almost as quick. No sooner had the squall struck us than he put the helm up and the next moment *The Rose's* bow fell off and her sails filled again and she went on as before. In the nick of time Winterstein eased away the mainsail.

The fine thing in the occurrence was Winterstein's extraordinary speed and strength. There he stood holding the mainsheet, his magnificent athlete's figure etched against the sky. Before I had taken in his splendid, unconscious pose, Daisy made an inarticulate exclamation as if she had caught her breath; but when I looked at her, her face was as composed as usual and without expression.

I thought at the time that the weather was chiefly responsible for the change in

the moral atmosphere. It is impossible to be good-tempered if you are wet through by day and up half the night shortening sail or ready to shorten it. For the schooner after all was only a small craft, and heavily sparred even for summer weather. The sails, it was evident, were too big for her, though Winterstein declared he had never seen such weather in September. I had never had harder work. Three days out of the four we worked all day long and half through the night. The little craft was undermanned. And though we were all strong, five or six pairs of hands cannot do the work of ten or twelve, and no man can be in two places at once. Our tempers began to get ragged.

On the first trip Crawford had been a great friend of mine; he was really a fine sailor and intelligent besides, and whenever I wanted to know anything, I used to go and talk with him, and even in Frisco I took him out with me to the theater once or twice, and was very much amused by his shrewd comments. But one day he called me to help him hauling in the jib.

"Bear a hand, damn you!" he cried. I was amazed.

"What's the matter, Crawford?" I said afterward, but he turned on his heel and muttered something about "lazy" in such a tone that I replied:

"Lazy or not, you had better curse some one else."

But afterward, in cool blood, I could not help asking myself what it all meant. I could find no reason for Crawford's change of manner. "Lazy" stuck in my mind. The day before had been fine and I had sat in a chair near Daisy, and read Whittier to her, but that could have nothing to do with Crawford, I decided, who seemed to me quite old: he must have been nearly forty.

The weather made little difference to Daisy. She was up on deck in all weathers, and seemed fairly to revel in a hard gale. When it was dry she used to wear a tight-knitted thing, like a long blue jersey, which outlined her slight figure, and when it was wet she would put on a waterproof, and tuck her hair inside a close hood, which seemed to frame her face lovingly; I liked her best when it simply blew hard, and we could walk about and talk.

About this time I began to notice that Donkin was trying in his uncouth way to make up to her. He seized every opportunity of talking to her and advising her. It was a remark of Crawford's that opened my eyes. They were standing together chatting one day when Crawford looked at me over his shoulder and said:

"She does not care for him any more than she cares for the mainmast, but the big fool thinks she does."

A pang of surprise and anger told me that I cared more than I admitted to myself. The idea of Donkin, great, ugly, sullen Donkin, side by side with that beauty and fine intelligence.

"Beauty and the beast," I said. Crawford looked at me and turned aside: I realized that I had spoken bitterly.

All this time there seemed to be less change in Winterstein than in any of the rest of us. Day after day and night after night he did two or three men's work, and did not seem to feel fatigue or need sleep. He was helped, of course, by his magnificent health and strength. He appeared to take it as a matter of course that I should monopolize Daisy, and we talked together at meal times almost as if he were not in the cabin. Our talk was mostly of books and works of art in which it was impossible for him to join. He listened, indeed, but could hardly expect to interest her in books as I could. Sometimes I read scraps of Shelley or Swinburne to her, and it was a treat to see her face flush and change with the varying emotions. Her eyes were extraor-

dinary; they drew the very soul out of one and tempted one perpetually to more passionate expression. Talks begun in the cabin continued with us on deck. No one made me talk as she did. She was something more than a sympathetic listener. She made one want to draw forth her interest or rare word of praise. But if she showed intense emotion about a piece of verse or some wonderful cloud effect, her interest was always impersonal. As soon as the talk became at all sentimental she would break it off and her eyes would grow inexpressive as brown stones.

After we had rounded the peninsula and turned into the Gulf, the weather suddenly improved. Day after day we floated along with a light breeze under a pale-blue sky, tremulous with excess of light. Day after day now Rose came up and we had tea and even dinner on deck. But somehow or other Rose never regained her position: we liked her and turned to her, attracted by her smiling good humor, but the spiritual interest of the ship was centered in her sister. Everything in Rose was open, comprehensible, from her flowerlike beauty to her manifest devotion to Winterstein, but Daisy was a closed book, a tantalizing puzzle; for all of us she had the charm of the unknown and unexplored. She entered into no direct competition with her sister; she simply kept apart as a rival queen and there could be no doubt that her court was better attended. You flattered Rose and paid compliments to her; the other you studied and sought to interest. Rose was always more than fair to her sister. In fact she praised her and made up to her timidly, like the rest of us. One day Winterstein had gone down for a pair of loose boots for his wife, as she wanted to walk. While he put the boots on we naturally talked of feet. I praised Rose's feet, but she would not have it.

"My feet are huge," she said, "in comparison to Daisy's. I take fours and she takes ones, don't you, Daisy? Show them."

Daisy looked at her with a little smile, but did not follow her advice.

"Come, Daisy, show us," I said.

She turned smiling, inscrutable eyes on me and that was all. Suddenly Winterstein laughed.

"Daisy wants to spare us," he said. Her face hardened.

"Daisy does not think it a matter of any moment," she said, "but, if you are all agreed, there you are!" And she pulled her feet together and drew up her skirts deliberately, showing tiny feet and two nervous, slight ankles. But almost at the same moment she sprang to her feet:

"Are you coming?" she threw to me, and walked down the deck.

"What wonderful feet you have," I said; "almost too small for your figure."

"Why should very small feet and hands be admired?" she said, turning to me.

I could not give her the answer that came into my mind, and hesitated, seeking some other explanation.

"It's traditional. I hardly know," I hesitated and sprang to knowledge for evasion. "All Greek statues of women have large feet," I remarked.

"But there must be a reason," she said, and her eyes probed mine.

"Yes," I replied, feeling annoyed with myself for getting red. She took it all in coolly and then changed the conversation; perhaps she understood more than she admitted.

In the Gulf we called at various small stations and did fairly well with the pearls. Rose had given Daisy my black-pearl necklace, I noticed: it seemed strange to me that all the affection should be on Rose's side.

The weather got finer and finer: it became so hot indeed that Winterstein fixed up an awning from the companion

to the poop. We used to keep the awning cool by throwing a couple of buckets of water on it before Rose came on deck, for she felt the heat intensely.

About this time I began to guess that her paleness and languor had a cause, and we all felt more kindly toward her, if that were possible. But the fact itself seemed to set her more and more apart, putting her outside our circle. The heat seemed to affect Daisy no more than it affected the rest of us. I used to get up nearly every morning and bathe, and when there was a wind Donkin or Crawford used to throw a bucket of water over me and I hopped about on the forecastle to dry myself. If there was no wind I went overboard, keeping near the vessel because of the sharks. One day I had just run up after my bath, I was still drying my head, when Daisy came up on deck.

"Oh, how I should like a swim," she said. "I've been so hot in that stewy cabin.

She did not look hot; she was always the picture of neatness. But Donkin put his oar in at once.

"Nothing easier, Miss Daisy."

When had he commenced calling her by her Christian name, I wondered angrily.

"Oh, but the sharks," she said. "If one were to bite a foot off, or a hand, I should kill myself. I do not mind death, but I would not be deformed for anything."

"We could rig a sail out on the yard, so that you could have four feet of water, and yet be perfectly safe," he replied.

"Oh, how splendid!" she said. "I wish you would."

"In ten minutes, Miss Daisy," he said, and turned away to the work, Crawford following at his heels.

"I must go down and get ready," she said, "but won't you come in with me? You won't mind bathing again; it will give me courage."

"I have no bathing things," I said, "but I can probably get a suit ready for to-morrow."

"What a pity!" she pouted. "Bathing alone is no fun. Can't you make something do?"

"I dare say I can," I replied.

"Please!" And she disappeared down the companion.

I went below and got myself ready with a loose flannel shirt, and a pair of duck trousers cut off at the knee, promising myself to hem them round next day. The rummaging about took me some time, and when I came on deck Daisy was already waiting and all the preparations had been made. A yard had been sheered out from the ship and stayed against the bulwark and companion. From the end of it a square sail had been let down by a cross yard at the end of the spar. The sail dipped into the water and formed a bath of perhaps twenty feet long, fifteen feet broad and four or five in depth. The gangway opened into the middle of it, and the little ladder led down to the water's edge. When I came up, Daisy was thanking them.

"Did you ever see such a perfect bath?" she said, turning to me. "Isn't it clever of them? I think you sailors"—and she looked into Donkin's eyes—"can just do anything." The fellow's weather-beaten hide flushed to brick red. "It was Mr. Crawford," she added, "who thought of putting the sail by the gangway. He thinks of everything."

She was diabolically clever; for the praise was deserved. Crawford's white face paled and he fidgeted under her eyes.

Daisy had on a little green cap, into which she had tucked her hair, and a great white bath sheet. Winterstein came up from below and stood close by.

"Will you go first?" I said.

She turned and undid the tapes at her neck, and let the bath towel slip on to

the white deck. She was in pale green with knickerbockers; a little tunic cut low at the neck fell over her hips. Her arms were bare, and her legs from the knees down. Everything suited her. She was adorable—girl and woman in one. The next moment she had slid down the ladder into the sea and was swimming about. In a moment I joined her, and then she explained to me that she could never float.

"My feet always go down," she said, "and before I know it I am standing on my feet upright in the water." Again and again she tried to float, but always with the same result. I wondered if she knew how provocative she was, as she lay there with the men leaning down from the bulwarks, all staring at her with hot eyes. When she came on deck she did not disappear at once into the bath cloak, which Donkin held ready for her. She stood there among the men on deck, and cried:

"Oh, I have enjoyed myself; it has been perfect. I am so much obliged to you," she said, turning to Donkin, "and to you, too, Mr. Crawford."

I noticed that Dyer at the helm devoured her with his eyes while Abraham's black face grinned from the forecastle hatch.

"It was kind of all of you," she went on; "the water was not a bit cold. You will put the sail down to-morrow, won't you?" she said to Donkin, as she stretched her arm backward over her head to get the cloak. The next moment she had drawn the cloak about her with a little gay laugh and disappeared down the companionway. It was as if the sun had gone out. I went forward to change my things while Donkin and Crawford busied themselves getting in the sail. Suddenly I heard Winterstein's voice:

"Here, you, Abraham, bear a hand with the swab here and dry up this water. As you've come on deck you may as well do something." I turned in surprise, the tone was strangely hard and menacing, utterly unlike Winterstein, but I did not catch a glimpse of his face, for as soon as he had given the order he turned away to stare at the land over the poop.

What was the meaning of it all, I asked myself, but I soon put the query out of my head, because I did not want to dull the vivid image of the girl. Was any one else as lovely? I asked myself. Her feet were like baby feet. What provocation in the crooked, girlish arms, what a challenge in the inscrutable, mutinous eyes!

I did not see Daisy again that morning until lunchtime, or dinner as we called it. I had fished persistently and called out loudly whenever I had the opportunity, hoping that it would bring her on deck, for she reveled in fishing, and was easily the champion because all the men vied with each other in picking the most attractive baits for her. In this game Crawford was easily first. He brought up a piece of red flannel one day, cut into the shape of a narrow tongue; on the other side of it he had sewn a glittering piece of white satin. Equipped with this bait no one had a chance with Daisy. She had caught three fish to my one, and as Donkin or Crawford was always at hand to pull up the wet line for her and take the hook from the fish and put the bait straight again, she had little to do except amuse herself.

At lunch she took all my compliments in complete silence.

"You would be able to float," I insisted, "if you would arch your back and keep your head right back."

But she would not have it.

"I do arch my back and put my head right back, but my feet pull me upright."

"Such tiny feet," I replied, "have not the power to pull any one down."

"You shall try to-morrow," she said. "I will keep as rigid as you please, and

you shall put your hand under my back to see whether I am stiff."

Winterstein suddenly spoke:

"Why don't you put that French thing on—that knitted thing instead of the tunic?"

"Do you mean the *maillot?*" she said slowly, looking him straight in the eyes.

He nodded. His expression I remembered afterward was a little strained.

"I have not worn it," she said with her eyes on the cloth, "since I bathed at the Cliff House, but as you wish it," she added slowly, "I will put it on," and she turned away indifferently. There was a tension in the air, but not on her side, I thought, as much as on his, but why?

"What is the *maillot* like?" I said, showing her that I knew the French word.

"It's a knitted thing," she said; "all the girls used to wear them and little French slippers. You know we have parties in the baths. I have got all the things still. I'll put them on to-morrow. I think they suit me. Some people used to say so," she added slowly.

Winterstein got up, and went into his wife's bedroom for something or other. When he returned I was leaving the cabin. Daisy called to me on the way up that she would bring Browning with her. She was sensitive to beauty of words or music and extraordinarily intelligent: I delighted to read her my favorite poems.

If I were a story-teller, I'd try to make all you people feel what we felt next morning. The weather was perfect, the sea like glass; the little schooner seemed to breathe gently as if sleeping on the oily swell. Rose came on deck early and established herself under the awning. I thought that her presence would make a difference, would act as a restraint on her sister, and I wished her away. I had got my bathing things in some sort of order the evening before. I rather fancied myself in them. I had not been on deck more than five minutes when I noticed a sort of subdued excitement in every one. All the men were on deck and they had all rigged themselves out more or less. Donkin was shaved and so was Crawford; Dyer limped about in clean ducks, and Abraham Lincoln had mounted a large white collar with a scarlet and blue tie. Winterstein alone had made no change. He talked to his wife while moving about whistling for wind as if indifferent.

For the first time I noticed clearly that Rose was soon to become a mother. Her face was a little white and drawn, and when she tried once or twice to take a few turns with Winterstein you could see that her figure had altered in spite of the loose dress she wore. I was looking over the little lifeboat which we carried on the davit amidship when I heard Daisy's voice.

"What a perfect day," she said, "and how delightful everything looks! I know I shall enjoy the bath."

Naturally I went toward her. She was standing close to the companion. Rose was sitting a yard or so behind it with her chair against the mahogany top. Every one was on the tiptoe of excitement. Donkin, Crawford, Abraham Lincoln, all moved like steel nibs toward the magnet, except Winterstein. The girl had her back to the men. Suddenly she opened her wrap a little to show herself in her *maillot* to her sister. Winterstein and I could not help seeing her as well. It caught my breath. The *maillot* was white; the meshes of it showed the rose-colored skin beneath. She looked like an ivory statue by some modern French artist.

"Oh, Daisy!" cried Rose.

"He told me to put it on," said Daisy defiantly looking at Winterstein while drawing the cloak about her again.

"You used to say it fitted me perfectly," she added, "and liked me in it."

"Yes," said Rose amiably, leaning back and closing her eyes, as if in pain or weariness, "it does suit you, but somehow or other it was different when half a dozen of you children were all wearing them in the bath; besides you've grown, I suppose."

"I'll take it off," said Daisy in the hard, clear voice which I had come to recognize as a sign of annoyance.

"Oh, no!" said Rose. "I'd bathe in it now I had it on. Go on," she said smiling; "the dip will do you good."

The girl turned and without a word went down into the cabin. In a minute or two she appeared.

"Will you go down first," she said to me, "and I will dive in."

She stood in the gangway with the shapeless wrap about her. I nodded, and without more ado, threw myself into the sea, and in a moment was standing on the sail dashing the water from my eyes. Daisy opened the wrap slowly and took her arms out of the sleeves with a sort of serpentine movement, infinitely graceful and provocative. She had put on her little tunic over the maillot. Yet I noticed that Donkin received her bathing cloak mechanically without taking his eyes off her. As she stood above me she swayed backward—down, down, the lines of her flexible young body changing every moment, and let herself glide into the sea. All the time she stood poised on the deck there was a steel band of hate round my chest. I do not think the girl knew what she was doing. As soon as she was in the water beside me all anger vanished; she seemed to belong to me then.

Suddenly she said she would float; she would arch her back and put her head back as far as she could, and I must put my hand under her waist and support her, then I would see how impossible it was for her to float. I did what I was told without thinking, and at first she floated and I looked into her face and cried:

"You see, you see!" But she was not looking at me, her face was set hard, there was a sort of defiance in it. I followed her glance up and saw Winterstein leaning over the bulwarks gazing down on her. I seemed to catch for the moment a sort of tension between them and then slowly the vase-like outlines of her hips sank lower into the water, and she came up smiling:

"See how my feet drag me down," she said, pushing her right foot up through the water in comic dismay, as if to show me how heavy it was.

Winterstein had left the bulwarks, but Donkin was looking down at her and Crawford and the others. She swam about a little and then climbed up the ladder and stood at the top of it, half in the hot sunshine, and half in the shade of the awning.

"It is too delicious," she said with a little shudder; "the water is warmer than the air. The air makes me shiver, but the water is warm like new milk. You should come and bathe, too, Rose."

"Put on your wrap and change quickly, or you'll catch cold," said Rose, who had picked up her things and was going down to the cabin. She spoke a little tartly, I thought.

The girl turned and let Donkin wrap the bathing cloak about her without a word. I caught sight of her as she turned, and the vision of her is with me still. I've wondered since if there was ever a more perfect figure. I can still see the dimples in her arms at the elbow and the drips of water diamonding the rosy skin as she lifted up her arms to take the cloak which Donkin was holding.

The next moment she had vanished down the companion. I stepped forward. Donkin and Crawford were standing close together still staring after the girl. As she disappeared they

turned and perhaps by accident jostled each other: in a flash their jealous hate flamed. Before one could think Donkin was holding Crawford by the throat while Crawford was striking him in the face savagely. The next moment Winterstein had thrust them apart.

"Are you mad?" he said to Donkin in repressed, low voice. "I'm ashamed of you," he added, turning to Crawford and speaking more naturally. Donkin glowered sullenly while Crawford muttered something and went forward. As I followed him Lincoln's black face went down the forehatchway and Dyer turned to take up his watch again; but not before I had noticed a certain antagonism on every face.

The rest of the day passed in a sort of stupor; Rose was on deck nearly the whole time, Winterstein always in attendance. Daisy and I walked the deck a good while together; I got her to say she liked me, but when I pressed her to say how much, she only laughed and changed the subject. She had a long talk with Donkin and another talk with Crawford; she even managed to smile at Dyer and transport him into the seventh heaven of delight. For the time I began to realize her insatiate vanity; she wanted all the men to admire her. I raged against her in my heart, raged the more because I was in the toils. I would have given ten years of my life to have been able to have taken that slight figure in my arms, and kissed the flower of her mouth.

But of all this she seemed unconscious, she was simply herself, quiet, aloof, and inscrutable till late in the afternoon, when a little breeze sprang up, a land breeze which gave the light schooner three or four knots an hour—good steering way. Then she had the lines up and fished from the poop. Donkin and myself waited on her, while Winterstein walked up and down beside his wife from the poop to the companion and from the companion to the poop in silence. Dyer steered and Abraham Lincoln came grinning to us every now and then to bring fresh bait for Miss Daisy.

The catastrophe came with startling suddenness. I see now that it must have come, that it was all prepared, inevitable. Yet the unexpectedness, the tragic completeness of it were overwhelming. It seems to have blotted out all that went before so that I do not know whether it was two or three days or half a dozen days later than the bathing or not. Anyhow, the bathing I have described was the last. For some days after we had lively breezes; the spar had to be taken in and the extemporized bath dismantled. We had called, I remember, at Mulege near Los Coyotes, and had had a good haul of pearls and a lot of hard work.

One afternoon we had been working hard and had had to row the boat for four or five miles over shallow water to a village where the inhabitants, we found, had collected pearls for years and years and had never before been visited. The bargaining was interminable. The fisherfolk had no standard of value. One man wanted a dollar for three or four fine pearls, another wanted fifty dollars for an insignificant, bad specimen, and we were on the strain of all-day bargaining and cajoling. I was tuckered out when I got to the boat and took the bow oar to Donkin's stroke while Winterstein sat in the stern sheets. I think Winterstein, too, must have been tired and exasperated, for he scarcely spoke all the way to the schooner.

When we got on board a six-knot breeze was blowing. After telling us to keep our course, Winterstein went below. I went down, too, and had a sleep; when I came up again I felt refreshed and vigorous.

The night was wonderfully beautiful. The moon rose like a crimson

wafer through a thin heat mist, but soon shook herself clear of her trailing garments and walked the purple like a queen. I noticed for the first time that the moon's radiance lent the edges of the nearer clouds a brownish, smoky-rose tinge. As the night wore on the fleecy, round clouds gathered closer together like silver shields hanging heavily against the blue vault; the moonlight grew fitful.

When I went down Daisy and Winterstein were both on deck. They were standing near each other just by the poop. When I came up after having had a cup of coffee and a biscuit they were still talking at intervals. She was sitting on the companion while he stood in front of her or moved away and then came back. I went forward to do something and when I returned they were still talking, which seemed strange to me, for they seldom exchanged more than a word or two. Every now and then she laughed, and the laugh was hard and clear: she was scornful, I thought. They seemed so preoccupied that I was annoyed and would not join them. Abraham Lincoln at the tiller was almost out of earshot. I suppose I was jealous. I noticed that when the moon came out from the darkening clouds they were some distance apart, but as soon as the light was veiled they seemed close together again. I was furious, my pride prevented me going near them, yet I could not but stare toward them at intervals, jealously watchful. Suddenly while I was a little to windward, just in line with the helmsman, the moon came out, and I saw Winterstein take Daisy's head quickly in his hands and kiss her on the lips; my heart had stopped. The moon showed everything as if it were daylight. I took a quick step forward when just as suddenly I became aware that Rose had come out of the companion and had seen her husband kissing her sister.

For a moment she stood petrified. I heard a faint exclamation, or was it merely her breath caught in a gasp and strangled? She turned and moved across the deck with her hand across her face. She struck the low bulwark and there was a splash in the water. The next moment Winterstein had sprung to the side and plunged in after her. The second splash seemed only a couple of seconds after the first. I jumped to the helm only just in time; for the darky had let it slip from his hands and was staring round where Winterstein disappeared. I crammed the tiller hard down, shouting:

"Man overboard, man overboard!"

The next moment Crawford sprang on deck. The little schooner was fluttering in the wind: she came about with a jerk just as Crawford and the darky dropped over the side into the dingy and began rowing back.

"What is it?" cried Donkin, running aft.

"Mrs. Winterstein fell overboard and Winterstein went after her. How long shall we take to get back, do you think?"

"It is a quarter of a mile," he replied, while loosening a life buoy.

"Then we must pick them up?" I said.

"Of course," he answered. "I guess Winterstein's a good swimmer."

"First rate," I replied, but my heart was hurting with fear.

At this moment Daisy passed across my line of vision going to the bulwarks to look ahead. The moon was full out and the light quite strong again. I looked at her face and it seemed as if she were excited, expectant, resolute; no trace of horror, or fear. I gasped and suspicion came to me. Could it be that she had wished for it? Her sister —it was impossible.

Two minutes more and we were alongside the boat again. Crawford had everything ready as usual and had

gone to the very spot, and as we came up the wind beside the boat I left the helm to the nigger and leaned over the bulwarks. I was just in time to see Winterstein come to the surface and haul himself up by the stern of the boat.

He stood there poised for a moment, and then hurled himself into the sea again as if he would go to the very bottom. My heart sank: he had not found her yet.

I called to Crawford to know if he had seen any trace of Rose.

"No sign," he replied, "and this is the skipper's fourth or fifth dive. I guess it's no good."

"I think you ought to come into the boat," he said a moment later, "and get Winterstein to come on board. He'll kill himself with his diving. I've never known a man keep down so long; he can't do it again."

I jumped into the boat, and a couple strokes took us to the spot where Winterstein had disappeared. We stared down on the dark surface, but there was not a sign or a sound. It seemed incredible that any man should be able to stay under so long.

Suddenly Crawford cried, "There he is," and gave a couple of quick strokes with his oar. Slowly the body came to the surface. As we caught hold of him we saw that the blood was streaming from his nose and mouth and ears.

"He's killed himself," said Crawford. "I thought he would."

We got back to the schooner in a moment and lifted Winterstein on board.

As I was helping to carry him toward the companion with his head in my hands, Daisy caught hold of me:

"Dead?" she cried, her eyes wild in the frozen face.

"I don't think so," I replied; "he stayed under too long. We must get him downstairs and bring him to."

"Ah!" she gasped, and let my arm go.

We carried Winterstein down to the cabin, turned him over and poured the water out of him. Afterward I blew whiskey up his nose and poured some down his throat, and in a few minutes he revived.

"Where is she?" he said, struggling to rise. "Have you got her?"

"It's no good, skipper," cried Crawford, holding him down. "We did our best. You did all one man could. She must have gone straight down. There's not a sign of her."

"I must find her," he said, struggling up. But he was too weak; he fell back fainting.

I do not know how the hours passed. I felt dazed; but with an ache at my heart and a sort of vague dread; it was all incredible to me. I could not believe that Rose was dead, drowned, that I should never see her again, that charming woman with her appealing, passionate soul. It was too awful to realize. I thought I'd wake up and find it all a bad dream. Suddenly I noticed that my legs were cold. I put my hand down; my trousers were dripping wet from carrying Winterstein. The next moment I became conscious that I was dead tired, drunk tired, my eyes were closing of themselves. Instinctively I turned into the forecastle, stretched myself on the lockers and slept.

When I awoke I did not know where I was: everything was strange to me. Then I remembered, and with the remembrance came the iron band about my chest constricting my heart. I got up and went on deck. No change there. The schooner was just drawing through the water, the sun shining, the light dancing on the wavelets, the air like wine. Dyer was at the helm. If only last night could have been blotted out! I could scarcely believe it was real. As I went aft, Crawford met me:

"How's Winterstein?" I asked.

"Sleeping now," he replied, "but he's been mighty bad. I never saw a man so

done up—never. How did it happen? How did his wife go overboard? You saw it." And his eyes probed mine.

"She came out of the companion," I said; "the deck was on a bit of a slant—it all happened so quickly." I felt myself flushing. I was angry with my hesitation.

"But why did she? How did she sink like that? It's mighty curious," he added suspiciously.

"Have you seen Miss Daisy?" I asked to change the current of his thought.

"*Miss* Daisy," he repeated, emphasizing the miss, so that I noticed how strange it was for me to use the formal courtesy, "Miss Daisy ain't been up yet. The nigger thinks 'twas jealousy between the two sisters; but he saw nothing. You must have seen."

I had time to recover myself, and chose a better way of putting him off the scent:

"It's awful, awful," I said, as if to myself. "I can't understand it." Crawford grunted, still suspicious.

But in spite of the tragedy, the suspicions, and the dark cloud of fear that hung over me as to what might happen next, the ordinary routine of life went on—luckily for all of us. A little after Abe called to me from the forecastle to come and have a cup of coffee. I found I was very hungry and after breakfast felt much better—more hopeful I mean, and fitter to meet whatever might occur.

Half an hour later, Crawford was at the helm steering. I was standing near the foremast when suddenly Daisy came out of the companion and spoke to Crawford in passing. He replied in a monosyllable, without the usual greeting, and then stared up at the mainsail as if there was nothing more to be said. The instinctive puritanism of the race spoke in his awkward, rude rebuff. I saw the color flood her cheeks and then ebb away. I loathed the man; I could have beaten him for his insolence; yet I was glad he had insulted her: why? She deserved it all and more, I thought hotly—and yet—she walked up the slanting deck, her little figure thrown back proudly. I crossed to windward between the masts to cut her off; why? I don't know. I only know that passion was in me; she seemed so far away from us all with that level, unseeing, unwavering glance; the proud aloofness attracted me. I had never before understood the fascination of her personality, of her courage. When we met she stopped and her eyes held me.

"I know you never meant it, Daisy," I said tamely and held out both my hands to her.

"Are you sure?" she replied, her eyes searching hard. The words shocked me. I did not realize that having just been insulted, she was all mistrust and temper; if only I had said the right word; but her pride angered me and for the moment I took her question that may have only been doubt of me for an admission of guilt. Fool that I was!

"God!" I exclaimed violently and stepped back. Her face hardened and she swept past me without another word or look, leaving me there confused, angry, wild, and back of all full of forgiveness—of admiration.

I could not but dread the first meeting with Winterstein. What would he say, how would he take it all? I had not much time to let imagination wander. As I turned in my walk, he was there. His appearance was shocking; it wasn't only that he was white and seemed ill; his clothes hung on him; he was shrunken and his eyes were bad to look upon—despairing—sad at one moment, the next hot in self-anger and exasperation.

I went to him at once, my heart full of pity. I saw he was all broken.

"I'm glad you're up," I cried cordially; "the air'll do you good."

He looked at me with such dumb misery in the glance that my eyes pricked; he nodded his head once or twice and then went over to the low poop and sat down.

A little later Dyer went to him and said breakfast was ready. He shook his head merely and sat on gazing moodily at the water.

The same thing happened at dinnertime, but when pressed to eat by Crawford he replied: "'Twould choke me. I'm all right."

The sweet old routine of life had done me good, so I thought it would do good to every one and should be kept up; accordingly I went to dinner in the cabin as usual. As Daisy did not appear I knocked at the stateroom and asked her to come. A minute or so later she entered quietly, but she hardly ate anything and spoke not at all. At supper it was the same thing.

Winterstein sat on the poop till far into the night. When Crawford came on watch, I took Winterstein below. He said merely, "I shan't sleep," but threw himself on the cabin sofa without undressing.

The next day passed in the same way, but before dinner Crawford told me that he could not get Winterstein to take anything.

"If he doesn't eat, he'll go crazy," he said. "He's just eatin' himself."

I told this to Daisy. She looked at me with set face.

"I have no influence," she said slowly, as if speaking to herself, "no influence, but I'll try." Her face went rigid as she spoke. I nodded and went with her up the companion ladder. But Winterstein didn't yield at first to her asking; he shook his head, merely saying, "I can't."

"The soup will help you," she said; and then slowly, "Rose would wish you to take it!"

"Oh, God!" he cried starting up and stretching out his arms, as if he couldn't bear to hear the name—and then sank down again. She put the cup in his hands and he took it and drank, and then relapsed again into his moody, brooding silence.

When she returned she went straight to her cabin and so another day went by.

The next day Winterstein took some soup I brought him. In the evening Crawford proposed to return at once to Frisco.

"I don't like his looks," he said; "he's worrying himself crazy and I guess the sooner we all get away from each other the better; perhaps we'll be able to forget the whole darned thing then and live again."

Donkin agreed with him, and so did I, and the ship's course was altered.

Daisy got into the way of walking the deck with Donkin. He adored the very planks she trod on and perhaps that touched her. Anyway, she was with him now more than with any of us. It made me angry and scornful, kept my jealousy alive, prevented me from understanding her or forgiving—I always saw the two heads together and the fatal kiss.

In this puzzling world mistakes or blunders often have worse results than crimes. The momentary yielding to passion brought the tragedy and the first tragedy inevitably drew on another.

We had got into the Equatorial Current and were making fine time up the coast toward Frisco. The weather was just what sailors like: a fair wind perfectly steady day after day; bright skies, and blue seas with scarcely a white horse to be seen. We did not alter the set of the canvas for days together; there was nothing for us to do. Unfortunately nothing to take our minds off the tragedy, nothing to change the feeling of misery and apprehension. I never passed such miserable

days: they seem like a nightmare to me still.

One morning I heard a row on deck and then what sounded like a shot. I threw a coat on and ran quickly up the companion. To my astonishment there was no one steering, the helm was lashed amidship. I heard a shout from overhead and saw Donkin and Crawford in the main rigging near the heel of the topmast. The next moment I noticed Winterstein seated on deck between the two masts. He was playing with a dead snapper, making believe that it was about to bite him, drawing his hand away quickly from the dead mouth with a cackle of amusement.

"Good God!" I wondered. "What's the matter?" As I went toward him it suddenly came to me: "He's mad," I said to myself. I was all broken up with pity.

The men in the rigging shouted, "Look out," just in time to put me on my guard: for Winterstein had a revolver beside him, and as soon as I came within his line of vision he took up the gun and leveled it at me crying:

"There's another of 'em," and fired without more ado.

I called out to him and backed away, but as he was preparing to fire again, I slid across the deck to the lee rigging and went up as fast as I could. Neither Donkin nor Crawford had anything new to tell me, except that Crawford had been slightly wounded by the first shot Winterstein had fired at him. It had just touched the right shoulder.

"It burns a bit," he said, "though it's not much more than skin deep."

The nigger and Dyer, it appeared, had both fled to the forecastle. We quickly resolved that the moment Winterstein went down below, one of us should seize him and the others tie him up.

"If I could only get him away from his gun," said Donkin, "I'd find out in five minutes whether he's as strong as he thinks himself."

"You'll find out how strong he is soon enough," I replied. "He's about the best man with his hands I ever saw. It will be all the three of us can do to get the better of him."

"I've never seen the man yet," said Donkin sturdily, "I was afraid of."

The trial came very soon. Of a sudden Winterstein stood up, threw the dogfish overboard and leaving his revolver on deck walked quickly aft, and disappeared down the companion. The next moment we slid down to the deck, Crawford arming himself with an iron belaying pin, a fearsome club at close quarters. I crept stealthily along the weather bulwarks to the companion and Donkin strode boldly down the deck. I think it must have been Donkin's heavy step that Winterstein heard; for just before I got to the companion he passed up it like a flash and stood facing him.

"Ho! Ho!" he cried, laughing, "Mr. Donkin wants some gruel, does he? Take it, take it then," and jumping in as lightly as a ballet dancer, he struck out right and left. His left caught Donkin in the face and the blood spurted as if the man had been hit with a hammer, the second blow caught him on the neck and hurled him down.

"Ho! Ho!" cried the madman again, dancing about so as to face Crawford. "Crawford wants some, too."

Fortunately for Crawford, Donkin was a very strong man, and scarcely had he been knocked down when he picked himself up again. He was angry, too, and his anger did him no good. With his head down like a bull he rushed at the skipper. Winterstein side-stepped him to windward and as he passed caught him a lefthanded shot under the ear with such force that Donkin seemed to touch nothing till he crashed into the lee bulwarks and lay there quiet enough. My chance had come: Winterstein was a yard from me. As

he struck Donkin I threw my arms about his waist from behind, pinning his right arm to his side. At the same time with the instinct of the wrestler I lifted him from the deck so as to make him as helpless as possible. For a moment he struggled wildly, roaring like a bull; then in a second broke my grip and got his right hand free. But I still held him and as I was well behind him he could not get at me easily. But he was too strong. The next moment his right hand had caught my collar and shifted to my neck and ear, and I felt myself being dragged round. I knew that the struggle could only last a second or two, and just as I was expecting his blow I heard a thud; the writhing form in my arms grew still and heavy and slid down on the deck. Crawford had run across and struck Winterstein on the temple with the iron belaying pin. Almost at the same moment Dyer and Abraham Lincoln ran up on deck. We hauled Donkin up out of the lee scuppers and told Dyer to throw water over him. We then wiped Winterstein's bleeding head and carried him down below to his berth, where we tied his hands and feet. Just after we had laid him out, Daisy came out of her little stateroom. She looked at us and in a phrase or two Crawford flung the tragedy at her. She did not seem to notice the man. She came straight to Winterstein.

"Leave him to me," she said imperiously, kneeling down beside him.

The second tragedy seemed to fall on numbed senses. I scarcely remember any sequence of time in what occurred afterward. I knew it soon came on to blow, but whether it was that day or the next or later, I could not tell. I remembered that Winterstein appeared on deck again and sat in his old place on the poop gazing out over the sea. His madness seemed to have left him, but his brooding silence now was often broken by periods during which he moved about muttering to himself incessantly. Crawford said he was talking of his wife or to her. He was tragic, terrible—a figure of despair.

We had altered our course again and were steering nor'west. The nor'west wind had grown to a gale, while the current was running strong under our feet. Between the tide and the wind the sea grew into hillocks and hills and still it blew harder and harder.

Long ago we had taken all the sails off her, leaving only a storm jib and a rag of tarpaulin in the mainmast rigging aft, and under these two handkerchiefs the schooner lay over so that her masts were near the water.

Late in the afternoon Crawford asked me to keep a sharp lookout.

"Frisco?" I asked, and he nodded.

I never was so glad of anything in my life; the band round my chest seemed to loosen.

The sun was going down in a sort of yellow glare. For over an hour or so Winterstein had been standing by the tarpaulin in the mainmast rigging staring over the waste of water. I clawed my way aft to him. The tarpaulin sheltered us from the fury of the wind and made an oasis of quiet in the uproar.

"We'll soon be in Frisco!" I cried.

He looked at me with unseeing, hopeless eyes: my heart turned to water. Suddenly he caught me by the shoulder.

"I can't stand it," he said, as if confiding to me; but in a tone so low I could hardly hear him. "I can't stand it."

"Time will soften the pain," I said. The words rang false even to me.

"No; no!" He shook his head. "It gets worse. If it had been an accident, I might have stood it; if some one else had done it, perhaps; but I did it—I! That's the thorn that festers and stings and burns, and gets worse, not better—

worse all the time. I was glad to go mad; I wish I could go mad again and not think of it all the time." And he passed his hand over his forehead in weary wretchedness.

"If I hadn't loved her so, I might sleep now and then and forget. I never cared for any other woman; she was perfect to me from the beginning. Hell!" he broke off, raging. "What sort of a fool was I—eh? Was there ever such a fool—a damned fool—damned——

"I don't know why I did it; it just took me at the moment. Hell!" And his eyes were wild. "I'm not fit to live; this world's no place for fools." And he laughed mirthlessly.

"I can't stand it, I just can't stand it! Oh, my sweet! Fancy hurting you!

"Is there any other life, eh?" I could not answer—my heart ached for him. "I never took much stock in it; but I'll soon know. So long," and he turned into the force of the wind and strode aft. Even then I noticed that he could walk the deck in the gale that seemed to blow my breath down my throat and choke me.

I clawed my way forward again. Winterstein was beyond my help. I was glad of the gale and wild seas and the danger; I didn't want to think. I was filled with fear and pain.

The wind came harder and harder. The tremendous weight of it seemed to flatten the sea, and you could only put your head above the bulwarks if you held on with both hands.

All that night Crawford stuck to the helm and it needed all his seamanship to bring us through the storm.

At twelve o'clock we lifted the light and a little later we got a little under the shelter of the land and the sea was not so bad. But the bar gave us an awful half hour. The little schooner came out of the broken water with deck swept clean: the boat had gone and all the bulwarks, and *The Rose* was leaking in a dozen places; she would never go to sea again.

When we came to anchor off Meiggs' wharf about three o'clock, we had all had enough of it. In spite of the fear that the little schooner might founder under us, and though I was freezing cold and wet, I went below and slept without turning in. I had not had a wink for two nights and had eaten nothing but a biscuit for thirty-six hours.

Crawford woke me; bright sunshine fell down the hatchway. As soon as I opened my eyes, I knew something was wrong.

"What is it?" I cried.

"Winterstein went overboard in the night," he said, "I don't know when, and the girl's been in faint after faint. Donkin's going to take her up to the house. I guess you had better get up; she may want to see you. But don't say anything harsh to her; she's had it bad enough."

I was on deck in five minutes in time to see Donkin bring Daisy out of the companion and take her across the ladder. He fairly lifted her into the boat, and as he turned to row her ashore I caught a glimpse of her face. It made me gasp: I never saw such a change—never. Her face had gone quite small like a little child's, and as white as if it had been made out of snow.

I could not stop on board the schooner; I guess everybody left it as soon as he could. I came East the same week and never saw any of 'em again.

A pretty bad story, ain't it? A brute of a story. Just like life. No meaning in it: the punishment out of all proportion to the sin. Sometimes it's like that. Sometimes things a thousand times worse go unpunished and then, for a little mistake or slip, tragedy piles itself on tragedy. There ain't no meaning in it, no sense. I don't believe

there's any purpose either, anywhere; it's just chance.

The judge broke off.

The dreadful story had held us; now some of the men stretched themselves, lit cigars, or took drinks, but no one spoke for quite a while.

Suddenly Charlie Railton said:

"That Daisy was a wild piece; but I thought you were going to tell us something about Mrs. Amory, judge. I thought perhaps you knew her."

"I knew a good deal about her," replied Barnett quietly, "though I never met her. I was mixed up in her affairs after her husband died. I was agent for the land she bought for almshouses. I let her have it cheaper because of the object.

"I ought to have met her a dozen times, but I never did, strange to say. Of course I knew all about her for the last two or three years. I knew she was a mighty good woman. Her lawyer, Hutchins, whom I knew well, always said so; said she was the best woman he ever saw, and one of the kindest. Amory just worshiped her, I believe, and she brought up his daughters by his first wife splendidly. She had only one child of her own and it died. It nearly killed her, Hutchins said. A mighty good woman, and I ought to have met her a dozen times, but it never happened so.

"When she died Hutchins insisted that I should go to the funeral. You know the house. I guess it's one of the finest in the States. They laid her out in the music room. It looks like a church with its high, painted windows and old tapestries and open timber roof: the paintings are all masterpieces: three or four Rembrandts, I believe. Well, they did the room up as a *chapelle ardente*—and laid her out there in state, and all Philadelphia went to visit and a good many of her girls cried over her. I went with Hutchins and nothing would do but he would have me go right up to the coffin. The moment I looked at her, the moment I saw her face—the little face no bigger than your hand, all frozen white—I knew her. That was the face I had seen in the boat when Donkin rowed her ashore thirty years before—'Jezebel's daughter,' I used to call her to myself.

"I was just struck dumb, but I knew that was why I had never met her. She had not wanted to meet me. I was a bit surprised when two or three days later I had a letter from her. Hutchins had to read the will and in it he found a letter addressed to me. I have not got it with me, but I can tell you some of what was in it; she had no reason to be ashamed of it. I was wrong to judge her as I did at the time. Young people are mighty severe in their judgings. As you get older you get more tolerant.

"With the letter there was a little box, and in the box a string of black pearls, the same I had given her sister. Mrs. Amory began by telling me that she had wanted to give them back to me, as soon as Donkin had told her they were mine, but all trace of me had been lost, and she had never heard of me again till long after her husband's death, when the end was near. She asked me to give the black pearls to my eldest daughter Kate, and she left me a string of white ones to give to my youngest daughter. She seemed to know all about us. She told me I had always misjudged her and I guess I had.

"Winterstein, it appeared, knew her first; used to meet her at the baths and swim with her and make up to her. She thought he was in love with her, and, girllike, gave him her soul; made him her god. Just before she went back to school she brought him home and introduced him to her sister, thinking that through her sister she would keep in touch with him. She heard no

more till her sister told her they were married. She said it drove her nearly crazy.

"I guess Rose never knew that Daisy loved him, but it was a bad tangle. Daisy did not say that Rose knew, but she said Rose ought to have known—anybody would have known. I think she was wrong. She was judging Rose by herself; she was mighty quick and observant while Rose just lived like a flower. Besides, Rose would never have wanted her on board the schooner if she had even suspected the truth. No; Rose acted in all innocence. But Daisy couldn't see that; she was hurt too badly to judge fairly.

"She did not excuse herself in the letter. She confessed it was her wounded vanity led her to provoke Winterstein. But she had no notion of anything worse. 'I saw he admired me,' she said, 'and that pleased me. I was hard and reckless; I felt hurt and cheated; he was mine and I could have made a great man of him, I thought. Oh, I was horribly to blame; but he caught my head that night and kissed me against my will. I could not get away. If I had been standing up, his lips should never have touched me. You will believe me—won't you—and forgive me; now that I am dead?'

"I forgave her all right," the judge said, "or rather I understood her and there was nothing to forgive. There's Angel and Devil in all of us, Charlie, and the Heaven and Hell, too, is of our own making, it seems to me."

WOMEN are pitiless with men whom they dislike.—*Alexandre Dumas.*

NOTHING is more calculated to inspire a woman with courage than the demonstration of intrepidity in the man she loves.—*L'abbé Prevost.*

REMEMBER, my dear Evelina, nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman: it is at once the most beautiful and most brittle of all human things. —*Fanny Burney.*

IT is a strange situation to find oneself enamored of a queen. It is as though one loved a star; yet she, the star, comes forth nightly to sparkle in her place in heaven. It is a kind of mysterious rendezvous. You may find her again, you may see her; she is not offended at your gaze. Oh, misery! To be poor, unknown, obscure, seated at the very foot of the ladder, and to feel one's heart breaking with love for something glittering, solemn and magnificent—for a woman whose meanest female attendant would scorn you; to gaze fixedly and fatefully upon one who never sees you, who never will see you; one to whom you are no more than a ripple on the sea of humanity, in no wise differing from the other ripples, and who might a hundred times encounter you without once recognizing you; to have no reason to offer should an opportunity for addressing her present itself in excuse for such mad audacity—neither poetical talent, nor great genius, nor superhuman qualification—nothing but love; and to be able to offer in exchange for beauty, nobility, power, and all imaginable splendor only one's passion and one's youth—rare offerings, forsooth!—*Theophile Gautier.*

by

Claude Farrère

Author of "Mademoiselle Dax" and "Thomas the Lambkin"

Ravaged Hands

Translated by Jenny Covan

IT all began at the English Park in Therapia, on the upper Bosphorus. Lady Gray, the ambassadress, was giving a great night rout. The entire diplomatic corps, distinguished foreigners stopping at the Summer Palace Hotel, and the staff of officers of the nine European battleships stationed near by, had attended. Under the sharp, peak-edged cliff from which, wreathlike, hung cypresses and parasol-shaped fir trees, a flower-bedecked stage had been set; and the secretaries, the officers and their wives—the latter delighted with the opportunity of daringly exhibiting their legs—gave an exceedingly bad performance of a "Midsummer Night's Dream," ballet included. But the moonlit park proved so stupendous a setting that all agreed the play had been exceedingly well acted.

And it had doubtless been written in the stars that on that evening Madame de Romans and naval lieutenant Pierre Villiers would find themselves seated side by side.

Her hair was more golden than pure gold and she had Creole eyes, as deep as wells. In the moonlight that was all Pierre Villiers saw. As for him, he was an average fellow of thirty, sound in body and of rather dashing appearance. When at the end of the play, those two slipped out for a stroll beneath the starry sky, I would have wagered a hundred to one that said stroll could not, in the slightest, affect either his or her destiny disturbingly. Yes, indeed! A hundred to one!

And I would have lost the wager.

"Don't you think," Pierre Villiers said, by way of conversation, "that this old Madame Caimak was quite ridiculous a while ago in her pink-and-blue chiffon?"

"Oh!" murmured Madame de Romans. "How can you think of that poor creature on a night like this?"

He lapsed into silence at once. Her relieving him of platitudinous utterances and her understanding love of silence, stirred him pleasantly. Arm in arm, they ascended to the highest terrace. The lanterns used during the ballet had been put out and the park, steeped in the shadows of night, was hauntingly beautiful.

She flung her arms out toward the still, faintly glimmering Bosphorus.

"Presently your *caïque* will glide across this silent water and take you back on board."

He pointed to the signal light of his ship, flickering in the distance.

"It is out there. And to-night I shall go back feeling, as I very often do, rather sad."

She had anticipated a banal phrase. But being, as it happened, a very sincere man, he had no intention of indulging in trite verbiage.

"Sad," he continued, "because I shall find myself alone after having, all evening long, gazed at many shoulders it would be heavenly to lean upon and glimpsed many hearts it would be delightful to caress."

She could not help answering:

"Others have greater cause than you to be sad; they are the ones who, presently, will not go alone but will find at home only the coldest indifference worse than solitude. You, at least, if you want to, may weep freely, without any interference."

Madame de Romans was the wife of a wealthy old grouch. She had beautiful diamonds, gowns from Doucet, a handsome limousine, a villa on the Bosphorus, and a town house on the Avenue Henri Martin in Paris. Incidentally, all these things actually belonged to her husband, for she was penniless when he had married her; she came of an aristocratic old family and was, socially speaking, a brilliant match, but as poor as Job. So that on her wedding day all her friends, gathered in front of the vestry after the ceremony, agreed that this little wren had most cleverly contrived to feather her nest.

Yet of the two, Monsieur de Romans was the more clever. Past fifty, he found himself the possessor of a nineteen-year-old wife, beautiful as the rising sun, soft as silk, candid as a child and wholesome as fresh bread. Since all these assets did not figure as dowry on the marriage contract, they afforded Madame de Romans no cause for vanity. And any husband endeavoring to win her love would have found the task easy to accomplish.

But Monsieur de Romans did not bother about it.

He began by treating his wife brutally enough to rouse her to the point of rebellion; then, fed up with sensations which were not sharp enough to suit his taste, he drifted back to other sensations, which are of no interest whatever to the reader.

To be sure, Madame de Romans would not have lacked a score of willing consolers, had not her husband's behavior filled her with a lingering repugnance for the thing men call love. And so, in her house on Avenue Henri Martin or in her villa on the Bosphorus, Madame de Romans remained actually much more alone than Lieutenant Pierre Villiers aboard his battleship.

It goes without saying that in the beginning Pierre Villiers and Madame de Romans were the purest of friends only.

And truly their friendship was an exquisite thing. A rare, romantic fate had brought together two human beings who were absolute equals. They were both infinitely loftier, prouder, and more human than the vast majority of ladies who reside on the Avenue Henri Martin and gentlemen one comes across on board the battleships of the French Republic.

But it also goes without saying that

on a certain evening, Pierre Villiers and Madame de Romans ceased to be friends only, in order to become a little more than friends.

This change occurred on the Bosphorus, and, to be more precise, in a *caïque*. *Caïques* are very long, narrow Turkish rowboats, which two or three oarsmen speed across the water faster than the kingfisher's flight. They hold space enough for two people. The rear cabin is a sort of litter of Persian rugs and cushions on which the occupants recline side by side. Incidentally, it is the chastest of beds, for one cannot stir ever so slightly without risking shipwreck: *caïques* invariably capsize at the faintest jolt.

A big crowd had dined in a villa in Buyukdere. Buyukdere is not far from Therapia, but the main road circles the banks of a deep bay, thereby making the journey a long and tedious one; while *caïques* cut straight across the sea in less than a half hour.

At midnight, Monsieur de Romans had called for his carriage, politely offering Pierre Villiers a seat in it.

"We will drive you directly opposite to your ship and then you will only have to cross."

"Thanks," said Villiers, "I have my *caïque*."

"You will travel ever so much faster than we," murmured Madame de Romans, "and the night must be so fragrant on the Bosphorus."

"Madame," ventured Pierre, "my *caïque* is a two-seater: if the crossing does not frighten you——"

Monsieur de Romans thought that alone in the carriage he would be able to smoke a cigar.

"Why not, my dear," he interposed graciously, "if it will please you?" He helped his wife down the steps of the wharf. Pierre Villiers, already in the boat, almost caught her in his arms and, very cautiously, helped her stretch across the bright-hued rugs—very cautiously, for *caïques* sometimes capsize in their moorings under the footsteps of a too-abrupt passenger.

The oarsmen, garbed in white under their short crimson cloaks, very gently pulled on the long, stout-handled oars and the *caïque* took flight on the black water, shot with stars.

Neither Pierre Villiers nor Madame de Romans uttered a single word.

But on the way across, Madame de Romans' head, guided by an unfathomable impulse, found Pierre Villiers' shoulder and leaned upon it. The *caïque* swayed ever so slightly.

"Aman! Dikat ediniz! Effendim!" (Please, take care, sir!) warned one of the boatmen.

In order to restore equilibrium, Pierre Villiers also bent his head toward that of his companion. And as he was the taller of the two, his lips touched the spun-gold hair.

They remained so, two eternally long minutes. The balmy, hushed night was more intimate than an alcove. At last, yielding, Madame de Romans' head fell back, her eyes passionately calling her friend's. And, likewise yielding, Pierre Villiers' head strained forward, madly seeking the caress.

The *caïque* swayed again, as though a shudder had run through it.

"Aman! Effendim!" said the boatman.

But this time neither she nor he heard him for their lips had met.

At the landing in Therapia, she trembled so violently that, while stepping ashore she stumbled against the steps and her knees weakly gave way.

"Do not see me again, ever," she said, taking leave of him. "I feel unbearably ashamed."

Needless to add, he called on her the following day and she received him.

For a month they dwelt wholly in a world of a glamorous, legendary romance. In a forest which had once

upon a time been the lordly domain of a mighty vizier of Suleïman, they held their enchanted trysts.

I do not know how many hours they spent on a tiny reef in the middle of a pond, staring into the water which mirrored their closely bent faces and their smiles, rapt with the ecstasy of being close, so very close together.

The spell would break only when passion surged within them. And later, they would awaken on the grass fragrant with rose scent, under the Oriental palms smelling of perfumed wax.

Seated in their trysting place, one evening, while kissing the proffered palms of her hands, a verse of Chrysis came to his memory. He said:

"Thy hands are like two lilies, from which thy fingers droop like five petals."

She had, in truth, soft and delicate hands which life had spared from coarse toil that hardens, wastes, despoils, withers.

He said:

"Thy hands are the pure and ardent reflection of thy pure and ardent soul."

At the time there lived in Constantinople an insignificant young woman, commonplace in everything except malice. She was a Mademoiselle Hutin. She was twenty-nine years old and still unmarried: her impending thirtieth birthday and simultaneous decrease of prospective husbands enraged her so that she spent her days spying upon other women, exultant in the occasional discovery of their weakness.

Her windows overlooked the Bosphorus. She would sit hour after hour on her balcony, watchful as a spider in its web; and this cruel vigil would seem short to her if, once during the day, her ever-active spyglass caught sight of a stealthy *caïque* in which two lovers had sought refuge from envious, prying eyes.

Mademoiselle Hutin soon found out that, quite often, Madame de Romans, alone in a *caïque*, would leave her villa early in the afternoon and return very late.

"Well, well!" thought Mademoiselle Hutin.

The spyglass having proved inadequate for further prying into these suspicious outings, Mademoiselle Hutin substituted for it a thick veil, a large, shielding parasol and a *caïque* drawn by four oarsmen, instructed to follow Madame de Romans' *caïque* at a distance.

On the way, Mademoiselle Hutin noticed Pierre Villiers' *caïque* far off, traveling in the same direction.

"Well, well, well!" thought Mademoiselle Hutin.

Upon returning home, Mademoiselle Hutin immediately started to organize a picnic.

Just a small, intimate picnic: she invited only four women friends and their beaux.

As for herself—correct hostess—she chose a dignified escort, thoroughly qualified to act as chaperon for them all: a man of fifty, Monsieur de Romans.

"And remember, don't tell a soul about it," she admonished. "You see, every one would ask to be included. And we are going to play and frolic like children."

"Where will we go?" some one asked.

"To visit Prince Percinet and Princesse Gracieuse!"

Pierre Villiers sat on a moss bank, on an islet in the middle of the pond. His beloved lay at his feet, her head nestled in his lap, the golden cascade of her unfurled hair rippling down to the grass.

From the opposite bank, suddenly, came a jeering, lashing voice:

"Bing! We seem to be disturbing a most peaceful tête-à-tête!"

Mademoiselle Hutin and her party emerged from the nearest thicket.

The lovers, caught in this trap like soldiers at ambush, behaved with quiet dignity and courage.

They came forward together and, head high, faced the situation. She, haughty and adamant, rested her hands on his shoulders, leaning upon him. He, almost smiling, drew out his notebook and wrote down the names he called out loud:

"Monsieur de Romans, one. Monsieur d'Epernon, two. Prince Cernuwicz, three. Commander Forestier—ah! this is too bad; I see I will have to resign from the service—and Monsieur Jacques Bryan, five. Is that all? Now, gentlemen, please go. Good-by for the present."

Alone once more, henceforth welded to each other for eternity, they clung together in a savage, passionate kiss.

That evening, Madame de Romans did not return to her villa in Therapia.

And two days later, five duels—all fought till the first drawing of blood—took place in Constantinople.

In her hotel room, she for whose sake they fought, waited until night, standing at the window, tense and horribly pale but dry eyed and unflinching, although every second her hallucinated vision beheld a stretcher slowly carried across the courtyard.

At dusk he came back safe, his arm in a sling. He had received three scratches and had retaliated with four such deep sword thrusts that two of his opponents had succumbed.

Monsieur de Romans alone escaped unhurt, displaying little pride in the fact. He consoled himself shortly after by suing for and obtaining a divorce from his wife who, scornfully, defaulted.

The scandal having proved insufferable, Pierre Villiers, who was no longer lieutenant in the navy—he had telegraphed his resignation in order to fight as quickly as possible—and Madame de Romans, whose name was no longer Madame de Romans, left Constantinople, to all appearances, forever.

Sitting very close in the stuffy little compartment of the train which bore them toward their new life, they made numerous plans for their future.

"Do not forget, dearest," he began, "that I am very poor, and that from now on ours will be very meager fare."

She smiled, radiant with courage. Since she had soared to the heights of triumphal rapture on that night when, after the five duels, he had come back to her alive and victorious, all the practical considerations in the world could not dim her sparkling happiness.

However, she was somewhat surprised.

"Dearest," she said, "I thought you were well off, at least, if not actually wealthy. Out there, you lived on a rather large scale."

He smiled.

"It seemed so, yes! Luxury to a seaman is a commodity cheaply bought. Remember that I lived on board ship, that I had no villa, no lodgings of any sort, and that my *caïque* served in lieu of horses and carriage. A few tailors', shirtmakers' and restaurants' accounts were all I had to settle for at the end of the month. I was provided with the bare necessities of life at no cost: to be sure, my stateroom was hardly seven foot long and the ship's daily mess was more than frugal. But a sailor in campaign is entitled to modest elegance and, to the world at large, I was in campaign."

She nodded understandingly.

"Just like my own case: I was thought rich while in reality I was poor. When people saw me, my throat hung with pearls, they never suspected that I was wearing my badge of slavery and that this badge, even more than I, be-

longed to my master. So now, dear, I have come to you stripped like a beggar. Do you love me still, unadorned as I am?"

They planned no further that evening.

Pierre Villiers had a yearly income of fifteen hundred francs, all told. Formerly, his officer's pay had quadrupled this amount but he no longer received any pay.

He explained the situation to her. He was certain he would quickly find a position that would enable them to live—very modestly, of course.

"What does being rich mean?" she asked, shrugging her rounded shoulders. "It means having servants, gowns, a luxurious home. Sweetheart, the only real joy I have ever known was that of our meeting in the woods. And I used to come there alone, clad in a simple gray-linen dress!"

Her cheerful courage made him oblivious to the obstacles accumulated in their path.

Incidentally, she was right. Matters shaped rather favorably and much more quickly than he had dared hope. The sought-for position was offered him—that of an electrical engineer in a small industrial town. They settled in Villefranche-sur-Saône. They rented a tiny, four-room flat—living room, dining room, bedroom and kitchen—on the fourth floor of a drab, gray house. Two of their windows faced a street crammed with shops; the other two opened on a stuffy little court, hemmed in by four walls, as high as church steeples.

He worked eleven hours of the day in a factory amid the whir of huge engines. It was too far from Villefranche to enable him to come back and lunch with her between morning and evening shifts. They could only dine together and, worn out with the day's labor, sleep. Their budget was too limited to allow them the services of a maid. A charwoman came mornings to help with the heavy work. And she who had been Madame de Romans did her own cleaning and cooking.

Their love was a vigorous tree: it did not wither in this barren soil.

A year went by.

They had become totally unlike the romantic lovers who, in the far-off, dreamlike setting of the Bosphorus, had linked their lives so impetuously, amid much bloodshed and shattered pride.

They now looked like any small-town, middle-class folk. Little by little they had been forced to give up the cherished intimacy of their love life. Monsieur Villiers, head electrician at the Charruyer factory, could not snub the handshake of Monsieur Durand, head bookkeeper with Dax Brothers; nor could he ignore the greeting of Monsieur Martin, headmaster or principal of the local high school.

"And how is your wife feeling, Monsieur Villiers?"

Every one took it for granted that they were married.

Madame Martin, who opined that Madame Villiers was a respectable and refined lady, while her husband was a man much above the position he held, invited them to dinner on Christmas Eve.

The Villiers family could do no less than return the hospitality with a festive luncheon on Twelfth Day.

And, very gently, very gradually, they sank into the rut of their new existence.

The routine of their days was monotonously alike.

They rose together very early. He would kiss her tenderly, saying, "Good morning, little wife!" At first he had said it in good-natured mimicry of similar phrases they occasionally heard through the flimsy partitions, but little by little it became an unconscious habit on his part.

Breakfast was eaten hastily, for the factory street car passed their corner at twenty minutes past six sharp. The charwoman did not come so early. The milk was heating on an alcohol lamp.

In the distance the street car horn bellowed through the morning fog. A hurried good-by kiss and he clattered down the dingy stairs.

Left alone, she would doggedly begin the task of setting her house in order.

The afternoon was devoted to sewing. Madame Villiers, of course, made all her own clothes, with the assistance of a local seamstress.

At night he came back, tired out and dusty. The soup steamed in the thick, cheaply colored plates.

They would chat a little then. But soon their eyes would grow heavy with sleep. At times he would suddenly stop short in the middle of a sentence and stare at her fixedly.

"What are you thinking of?" she would ask.

"I am thinking that, had you never met me, to-night you would be dining in a low-cut gown, seated between two gentlemen in evening clothes."

"Silly!" would be her laughing reply.

She never uttered a single word of complaint or regret. Never!

Besides, their life, although narrow, was not sordid. When, at the end of the month, he would bring her the three hundred francs, constituting his wages, she had always managed to put by some small sum. And at the end of each trimester, the slim dividends issued from their stocks, added a bit of comfort to the household.

"When you earn three hundred and fifty francs," she said to him one day, "we will hire a maid; then, I think, we will be altogether comfortable."

Of an afternoon in July work came to a standstill at the factory, for the river waters had ebbed far below the average low-water mark: the supply source was shut off and the main tank was bone dry.

"Nothing can be done about it," said Villiers to the boss; "we must wait. To-morrow morning, with any luck, we'll have a level of about sixty inches in the main tank and we'll be able to start half of the machines working."

"Too bad!" said the boss. "But since it can't be helped, dismiss your men till to-morrow and take the day off."

So Pierre Villiers reached home at three o'clock that afternoon.

He did not ring the bell but let himself in with his pass-key. The living room and the dining room were deserted. He came to the kitchen door.

"Dearest!"

Kneeling on the gray, tiled floor, she was briskly scrubbing it with a soapy, coarse-bristled brush.

He caught her, drew toward him the sweat-moistened face and kissed her small, dripping hands.

"Dearest!"

Suddenly the smile vanished from his face.

Forgotten long since, yet graven in his heart forever, the verses of Chrysis had suddenly burst into song:

"Thy hands are like two lilies, from which thy fingers droop like five petals."

Poor, wretched, pitiful hands, wasted, worn, bruised with the heavy, daily toil, coarsened by soap and brush, greasy dishes and boiling water; charred and blackened by coal and flame.

Poor, misshapen, thick, numb fingers. Callous palms that had once been as flower chalices; chapped, rough skin that had once been as alabaster!

Ravaged hands!

He repeated, while cold anxiety tore like an ill wind across his tranquillity:

"Thy hands are the pure and ardent reflection of thy pure and ardent soul."

The soul—the soul—why, it had remained unchanged, hadn't it, unsullied by soap, flame and toil? The hands

alone had grown coarse and wrinkled, while the soul remained untouched?

He delved still deeper, gazing with pitiless, horror-filled eyes.

One by one, words she had spoken rose to his memory: snatches of sentences of no importance lingering in his lover's mind; brief words that had slipped from the familiar trend of thought and which are fragments of thought in themselves; words spoken yesterday, words spoken to-day.

Yesterday:

"I should like to be the little beggar girl we met in the country; she is almost naked and always starved, but she romps freely about the woods and the fields, and when she wants to weep no one compels her to laugh."

"What does being rich mean? It means having servants, gowns, a luxurious home. The only real happiness I have ever known was to sit on a moss bank in a simple linen dress, alone with you."

"It is sweeter to embrace above the pond because the water mirrors our kiss and that makes two kisses instead of one."

And the evening he came back after the five duels, smiling heroically:

"Good evening! How very nice of you not to let me dine alone!"

Nothing beyond those few words, while her small hand was still clutching the vial of laudanum in case——

To-day:

"When you'll begin to earn three hundred and fifty francs we'll be perfectly happy."

"Would you believe it, the price of meat has gone up another fifteen cents?"

"I spent the afternoon with Madame Durand. She is a very kindly person and has some very interesting family anecdotes."

"With the house to care for, the mending to be done and the neighbors to chat with, how do you expect me to have any time left for reading?"

And yet, deep down, the soul has remained the same. Yes, indeed! Formerly, in order to be with him, she would have swallowed laudanum; to-day, in order to save his life she would jump into the river. He is sure of it, quite sure. Then what matters the outer change? What matters the new garment, of sackcloth instead of silk?

Alas! Beneath the tanned skin, beneath the coarsened flesh, the hands still retain their slender, ivorylike framework. And yet their beauty has vanished.

He thinks, a cold shudder running down his spine:

"We have joined our lives, with absolute disregard for prejudices and morals. In the name of our love we have scandalized a whole town and dug two men's graves. This love, in the beginning similar to the blood-steeped nuptials of Romeo and Juliet—have we the right to fashion it into the marital, humdrum affection of Monsieur and Madame Durand? This woman I fought for who was the incarnation of a poet's dream—have I the right to turn her into a household drudge? And what about myself? We two who, clasped in each other's arms by the Turkish pond, unflinchingly faced five swords about to be drawn against us: we two, who were sufficiently superhuman to justify our rebellion against society, have we the right to become a middle-class couple, narrow in every way?

"It seems to me we have not the right!"

They stood facing each other and gravely discussed the problem, while the soapy water dried on the gray-tiled floor in big, round, mildewy-looking circles.

She protested at first.

"But since we're happy?"

He replied forcefully:

"We have killed, and we have re-

belled! If we did it only for the sake of achieving commonplace, mediocre happiness, such as that of the Martins and the Durands who have never failed to attend Sunday mass, then we are monstrously selfish and cruel."

After a moment's pause he went on:

"In order to become an outlaw, one must be bigger than the law itself. In order to paint his Prometheus, Parrhasius tortured a free man; but the Prometheus was a masterpiece and that is all posterity asked for. If Parrhasius' painting had not won the admiring plaudits of all Greece, Parrhasius would have been a common murderer."

She listened silently, her eyes downcast.

"You see," he concluded, "we had the right to do what we did only provided we were to build on the ruins of the past a happiness so exalted and glorious that its dazzle would have cast into the shadow all else and would have changed our crimes into virtues. We should have remained superpeople, heroes. Instead of that, our present mode of life drags us down to the level of that commonplace human herd for which laws were made."

She raised her eyes to his.

"What then?" she asked.

"I think there is no way out," he said. "This life we are leading will, slowly but surely, swallow us up in the end. Neither you nor I were meant to earn our daily bread. We have bridged the gap which separates humanity into two classes: the lower, which is busy existing, and the upper, which is busy philosophizing. To voluntarily retrace one's steps from one to the other, as we did, is sinful. Yet there is no way out. We would have to completely change our mode of existence, dwell in a different sphere, and we cannot do it. We must live first!"

She was pondering, her brow slightly puckered. She repeated:

"We must live——"

There was a long silence. She seemed to gather her stray thoughts and, perhaps, her courage. He stared motionlessly at the floor on which the soap had finished drying.

"Listen!" she said suddenly.

She began to speak in a low, crisp voice. At the first words she uttered he shuddered with fright. But very gently she subdued him and he listened quietly till the very end.

When she had finished he murmured:

"Fiat voluntas tua!"

Then, kneeling before her, he touched the hem of her skirt with his lips.

Instead of returning to the factory on the following day, Pierre Villiers wrote the Charruyer Company informing them that in the future they would have to dispense with his services.

Then he went to Lyon, where he sold his stockholdings on the exchange. He came back that evening with thirty-eight thousand francs in his wallet—their entire fortune. He found the house empty of furniture and the trunks packed. On the door hung a sign reading: "Four-room apartment for rent."

An expressman came for their luggage. The railroad station being near by, they set out on foot. They had said good-by to no one. When they reached the street corner, she turned round for a last glance at the two small windows on the top floor of the gray building. And though she may have wanted to weep, she did not.

At the station they bought two first-class tickets on the nine fourteen express for Paris.

They remained in Paris a fortnight. She spent her afternoons at the shops, selecting and trying on beautiful gowns. They spent money heedlessly, recklessly.

Every day she devoted endless hours to minute, luxurious details of beauty care. Her hands, bathed, pumiced, massaged, very quickly became once more the beautiful, classic hands of a statue

On the fifteenth evening they left. This time they went to the Eastern depot to board the stuffy little train which, two years before, had carried them from Constantinople to France—from the dream to reality.

They were journeying back to the dream.

They arrived on a radiant August morning. A veil of golden mist floated above the Bosphorus, and upon the rippling mirror of the sea the sun cast the shadow of a giant cypress tree shimmering with golden lights.

The round mosques, the tall, finely chiseled minarets, the marble palaces as well as the wooden huts, seemed to recognize and greet them. Their old love, inviolate, eternal, beckoned to them at each turn of the road.

They engaged the most luxurious suite at the Summer Palace Hotel. They had their own carriage with the finest horses obtainable; also a *caïque* and six oarsmen.

The season was at its height. Across the sea glided an incessant stream of festive *caïques*, resplendent with the gay, motley-colored headgear and parasols of their feminine occupants. On the promenade pier, luxurious carriages with full-liveried flunkeys drove in procession with groups of Amazons riding spirited thoroughbreds. In the Buyukdere field polo games were going at full speed.

With a great show of splendor, the lovers took part in the activities of the social whirl. Their arrival created a commotion. On the hotel register they had proudly signed their names, which still conjured the echo of old scandals: "Pierre Villiers, Madame de Romans." And from the evening of their arrival, they were seen nightly in the big, white dining room, seated so close at their flower-littered table that their shoulders constantly touched.

They were seen everywhere, at all hours, at luncheons and dinners, on the promenade pier, walking, riding, boating. Always alone, their hands twined, they flaunted their radiant, glorious, superhuman love in the face of all creation.

"Crime-begotten happiness!" some one had murmured at the start.

But soon after a group of sincere people protested.

"Nonsense! We would all do as they did if we had the courage to. Besides, look at them: there is not the slightest shadow of guilt in their happiness."

Twice they made a pilgrimage to the cemetery of Fery-Keuy and scattered violets on the graves of Monsieur d'Epernon and Prince Cernuwicz till the ground was fairly covered with them. And every one understood this was their way of paying homage to the ashes of those whose blood had helped strengthen the tie that bound them.

They made other pilgrimages. They visited the English Park and sat at the foot of the peak-edged cliff from which hung cypresses and parasol-shaped fir trees. It was late afternoon. A russet twilight rose vaporously from the hills of Asia and three stars glimmered faintly above the Bosphorus. Arm in arm they strolled through the garden paths already steeped in nocturnal shadows. Having ascended to the highest terrace, they gazed upon the river from the very spot which had been the birthplace of their love.

They journeyed back to the forest of the once-upon-a-time mighty vizier. I do not know how many hours they spent in the islet, in the middle of the pond. As formerly, he would sit on a moss bank. She would lie at his feet, her head nestled in his lap, the golden cascade of her unfurled hair rippling down to the grass.

And if they were intruded upon by some passers-by, this time no one even dared smile.

August glided by, velvety smooth. Fall, preceded by fragrant, dewy nights, comes early to the Bosphorus. Eager to enjoy the last mild days, people hurled themselves into an orgy of pleasure. Upon land and water alike, it was an uninterrupted round of boat races, swimming meets, hunts, moonlight parties, villas ablaze with lights.

The rebels, too, had their share of festivities. Always alone and scorning the whole world to the point of ignoring it, they became more and more enraptured with each other in an apotheosis of love. For their tête-à-tête dinners at the little table, decorated like an altar, she wore gowns fit for an empress. On their sailing excursions a boat full of violin players followed in the trail of their *caïque*, and at night a row of torches lit their way across the Bosphorus. On the threshold of their nuptial sanctum, nightly they strewed by the armful a carpet of fresh roses.

September came. The anniversary of the Padischah was celebrated riotously. The Bosphorus, Stamboul, Pera, Europe and Asia became a flaming mass of motley-colored fireworks. Until early dawn the sky blazed with rockets and pinwheels. But when the last sparks had died out, the moon rose, crimson colored, a foreboding of winter.

The following morning Madame de Romans, leaning out of the window, shivered; a cold wind was blowing from the Black Sea.

She went in. In the small sitting room Pierre Villiers, standing motionless, was waiting for her. Very gently he called her to him. Then, putting his arms around her, he opened his wallet and held it before her.

It was empty.

One by one, the thirty-eight thousand-franc bills had vanished.

Above clinging lips, the eyes of the lovers met. He remained silent. She was able to smile.

That night, as usual, they called for their *caïque*. The wind had died down and the night was balmy.

In a sudden whim, Pierre Villiers had ordered the oarsmen to remain ashore. And he himself took a pair of oars while his beloved stretched on the cushions of the rear cabin alone.

Two servants with torches, as well as the violinists, stood on the wharf, awaiting orders. But Madame de Romans dismissed them all.

"To-night, silence!"

Pierre Villiers pulled on the wooden handles and the *caïque* slowly wended its way through the night.

They remained silent as they did on the memorable night, nearly two years ago, when in the very same *caïque* they had surrendered to their first kiss.

The blackness about them was impenetrable. The Bosphorus was like a sepulchral mantle on which the stars shone like blurry silver tears.

In the middle of the sound, Pierre Villiers stopped rowing. The *caïque* floated lifelessly and carried by the tide, drifted toward far-away shores. The villages of Europe, Asia, Buyukdere, Therapia, Yeni-Keuy, Canlidja and Beicos were hardly visible on the horizon. And the forsaken waters seemed a strange world, cut off from the luminous world of mankind by an insurmountable, infinite vastness.

Pierre rose and carefully slid toward the rear cabin of the *caïque*. Very cautiously he stretched on the cushions, close to his beloved. Silently they embraced. The *caïque* swayed a little.

A lovers' embrace lasts but a moment. A feeble cry rang out across the water —a woman's farewell cry of bliss.

Simultaneously their clasped hands pressed violently on the sides of the *caïque*. It gave way, capsized. It was the end.

By

Henri Murger

Author of "Mademoiselle Musette" and "Lenten Loves"

What a Crown Piece Costs

ONE Saturday evening, in the days before Rodolphe and Mademoiselle Mimi kept house together—as shall be shown in due time—it so fell out that that gentleman made the acquaintance of one Mademoiselle Laure, who dined at the same ordinary. Now Mademoiselle Laure kept a toilet repository, and when she found that Rodolphe was editor of two fashion papers, the *Iris* and the *Castor*, plied him with provocative and eloquent glances in the hope of obtaining an advertisement for her wares. To these Rodolphe had replied with a display of poetical fireworks thrown off in a way that would have driven Benserade, Voiture and all the Ruggieris of the "gallant style" wild with envy; and, dinner ended, Mademoiselle Laure, perceiving that Rodolphe was a poet, gave him to understand pretty plainly that she was far from averse to accepting him as her Petrarch. She even made a tryst for the morrow without any beating about the bush.

"By Jove!" thought Rodolphe, as he escorted Mademoiselle Laure to her lodging: "She is really an amiable woman; she seems to me to possess some knowledge of grammar, and a fairly well replenished wardrobe. I feel quite disposed to make her happy."

Arrived at Mademoiselle Laure's door, that lady thanked him for so kindly taking the trouble to come with her to such an out-of-the-way quarter.

"Ah, madame!" returned Rodolphe, bowing to the ground before her, "I could have wished that you dwelt at Moscow or in the Straits Settlements, that my pleasure in acting as your escort might be prolonged."

"It is rather far," simpered Mademoiselle Laure.

"We should have gone by the Boule-

vards, madame," said Rodolphe. "Permit me to kiss your hand, in the person of your cheek," he added, kissing his companion on the lips before she could stop him.

"Monsieur!" she exclaimed. "You are going too fast."

"So as to arrive all the sooner," said Rodolphe. "The first stages of love should be taken at a gallop."

"An odd man!" thought the milliner as she went upstairs.

"A pretty woman!" said Rodolphe to himself as he turned away. And back again in his own quarters, he went straight to bed and dreamed the sweetest dreams. He beheld himself parading with Mademoiselle Laure at balls and theaters and in public places, and the lady on his arm wore dresses more splendid than those of any coquettish princess in a fairy tale.

Next day, at eleven o'clock, Rodolphe rose according to custom, and his first thought was for Mademoisile Laure.

"A very pretty woman," muttered he. "I am sure she was brought up at Saint Denis. So at last I am to know the happiness of having a mistress that is not dowdy looking. I positively must make some sacrifice for her. I shall draw my pay at the *Iris* office to-day; I will buy a pair of gloves and take Laure to dine at a restaurant where there are table napkins. My coat is not very elegant," he went on as he dressed. "Pooh! It is black, though, and that is the great thing." And he set out for the office of the *Iris*.

Just as he crossed the street he met an omnibus, and pasted over one of the panels was a handbill thus conceived:

This day, Sunday, the great fountains will play at Versailles.

A thunderbolt dropping at Rodolphe's feet could not have made a more profound impression than the sight of that bill.

"'This day, Sunday!' I had forgotten that it was Sunday, and now I shall not get the money. 'This day, Sunday!' Why, all the five-franc pieces in Paris will be rolling out to Versailles."

Still, urged on by the illusive hopes which spring eternal in the breast of man, Rodolphe hurried to the office in case some blessed chance should have brought the cashier.

Monsieur Boniface, he found, had actually been there, but had gone away again almost immediately. "To go to Versailles," so the office boy told Rodolphe.

"Come," he said to himself, "there is an end of that. But, let us see," he continued, "my appointment is not until evening. It is noon; so I have five hours in which to find five francs—twenty sous per hour—like the horses in the Bois de Boulogne. So come along."

As he happened to be in the neighborhood of the journalist whom he styled the influential critic, Rodolphe bethought himself of trying something in that quarter.

"I am sure to find *him* at home," he thought, as he climbed the stairs. "It is his 'special column' day, there is no fear of his going out. I shall borrow five francs of him."

"Eh! What, is that you?" said the literary man at sight of Rodolphe. "Just the man I want; I have a little favor to ask of you."

"Just my case," thought the editor of the *Iris*.

"Were you at the Odéon yesterday?"

"I am always at the Odéon."

"Then you saw the new piece there?"

"Who but I? I am the audience at the Odéon."

"True," returned the critic, "you are one of the caryatids of that theater. There is even a rumor current that you subsidize that institution. Well, this is what I want to ask—a paragraph about the new play."

"That is easy; I have the memory of a dun."

"Whose is the new piece?" the critic inquired, as Rodolphe wrote.

"It is by a gentleman."

"It is not likely to be a strong play."

"Not as strong as a Turk assuredly."

"Then it is nothing very powerful. The Turks don't deserve their reputation for strength, you see; they could not be Savoyards."

"And what hinders them?"

"They can't, because all the Savoyards are Auvergnats, and the Auvergnats are street porters. What is more, there are no Turks left, except perhaps at the masked balls at the Barriers and in the Champs Elysées, where they sell dates. The Turk is a superstition. I have a friend who knows the East; he assured me that all nations came originally out of the Rue Coquenard."

"That is a pretty thing to say."

"Think so?" said the critic. "I will put it into my column."

"Here is my analysis; it is an analysis, too, and no mistake."

"Yes, but it is short."

"You can fill up with putting in dashes, and developing your critical opinion."

"I have hardly time enough for that, my dear fellow, and then my critical opinion does not take up space enough."

"You can put in an adjective at every third word."

"Could you not slip a little, or rather a long appreciation of the piece into your analysis, eh?"

"Lord!" returned Rodolphe. "I have some ideas of my own on tragedy, but I warn you I have printed them three times in the *Castor* and the *Iris*.

"That is of no consequence; how many lines would your ideas take up?"

"Forty."

"The deuce! You have large ideas of your own! Well, let me have the loan of your forty lines."

"Good," thought Rodolphe. "If I do twenty francs' worth of copy for him, he cannot refuse to lend me five francs. I ought to warn you," he went on, addressing the critic, "that my ideas are not altogether novel. They are a trifle rubbed at the elbow. Before printing them at all I have yelled them aloud in every café in Paris; there is not a waiter that does not know them by heart."

"Oh! What does that matter to me? Why, you cannot know me! Is there anything new under the sun—except virtue?"

"Here it is," said Rodolphe, as he came to an end.

"Thunder and tempest! Still two columns short. With what can I fill the abyss?" cried the critic. "While you are about it, just oblige me with a few paradoxes."

"I have none about me," said Rodolphe. "Still, I can lend you one or two, only they are not my own. I bought them for fifty centimes apiece of a friend who was hard up. They have not been much used yet."

"Very good," said the critic, and Rodolphe set himself to write afresh.

"Ha!" thought he: "I shall certainly ask him for ten francs now; in these times paradoxes are as dear as partridges." And he knocked off a score of lines of remarkable nonsense concerning pianos, red mullet, the common-sense school and Rhine wine which he called Rhine toilet-vinegar.

"Very pretty!" pronounced the critic. "Be so much my friend as to add that there are more honest people in the hulks than anywhere else."

"Bless me! Why that?"

"To make two more lines. Good, that is done," said the influential critic, and he called to his servant to take the copy to the printer.

"Now let us go for him," thought Rodolphe, and he soberly articulated his request.

"Oh, my dear fellow, I have not a sou here! Lolotte is the ruination of

me with her cosmetics. She has just waylaid me, and carried off my last brass farthing to go to Versailles to see the Nereids and brazen monsters spout."

"Versailles! There now!" said Rodolphe. "Why it is an epidemic!"

"But what do *you* want money for?"

"Here is the ditty. I have an appointment at five o'clock with a lady, a woman of fashion, who never goes out except in an omnibus. I should like to unite our destinies—for a few days—and it seems only decent to enable her to enjoy something of the sweetness of life—dinners, dances, walks and the like. I absolutely must have five francs. If I cannot find the money, French literature is disgraced in my person."

"Why not borrow the sum of the lady herself?" cried the critic.

"That is hardly possible, the very first time. No one but you can get me out of this fix."

"By all the mummies in Egypt, I swear to you on my sacred word of honor, that I have not enough to buy a halfpenny pipe. Still, I have a few books there, which you might melt down into cash."

"To-day — Sunday? Impossible! Mother Mansut, Lebigre and all the other skinflints on the quays and in the Rue Saint Jacques are shut. What are your books? Volumes of poetry, with the portrait of the author in spectacles? There is no sale for that kind of thing."

"Not unless they are sold by order of the Court," said the critic. "Stay a bit, though, there are some novels besides and some concert tickets. If you manage cleverly you might turn them into money."

"I would rather have something else—a pair of trousers, for instance."

"Come, now!" said the critic. "Take the Bossuet, and the plaster cast of Monsieur Odilon Barrot; it is the widow's mite, upon my honor."

"You are doing your best, I see," said Rodolphe. "I will carry off these treasures, but if I get thirty sous out of them I shall think of it as a thirteenth labor of Hercules."

By dint of walking some ten miles or so, and exerting a certain faculty of eloquence which Rodolphe knew how to use on great occasions, he succeeded in inducing his laundress to lend him a couple of francs on the security of his consignment of poetry and novels with Monsieur Barrot's portrait.

"Come," said he as he went back across the river, "we have the sauce, now for the dish. Suppose I go to my uncle."

Half an hour later his Uncle Monetti read his nephew's countenance, and knew what was coming. So, being on his guard, he was beforehand with his young relative, and began at once with a series of recriminations, as thus:

Times were bad; bread was dear; outstanding debts were not paid; rent must be paid; trade was going to the dogs; and so forth, and so forth, through the whole disingenuous tradesman's litany.

"Would you believe it? I have had to borrow money of my own shop boy to meet a bill!"

"You ought to have sent to me," said Rodolphe; "I would have lent you the money. I had two hundred francs paid to me three days ago."

"Thank you, my boy; but you want all you have. Oh! While you are here you might make out some invoices for me, you that write such a good hand. I am just going to send them out."

"These five francs are like to cost me dear!" said Rodolphe to himself as he set to work, but he cut short his task.

"I know how fond you are of music, my dear uncle," he began, turning to Monetti, "so I have brought you some tickets for a concert."

"Very kind of you, my boy. Will you stay and dine with me?"

"Thank you, uncle; I have an invitation to dinner in the Faubourg Saint Germain. By-the-by, it is annoying; I shall not have time to go home for money, and I must buy a pair of gloves."

"You have no gloves? Will you borrow mine?"

"Thanks; no. The size is different; still, if you would oblige me by a loan of——"

"Twenty-nine sous to buy a pair? Certainly, my boy, here is the money. You must be well dressed if you go into society. Better be envied than pitied, as your aunt used to say. Come, now, you are getting on, I see. So much the better. I would let you have more," he went on, "but that is all I have in the till; I should have to go upstairs, and I cannot leave the shop, customers drop in every minute."

"And you were saying that trade was slack!"

Uncle Monetti did not seem to hear this remark.

"There is no hurry about returning it," he said, as his nephew pocketed the coins.

"What a skinflint!" said Rodolphe, as he made good his escape. "Let us see, now—still thirty-one sous short. Where are they to come from? But, come to think of it, let us go to the Carrefour de la Providence." For thus Rodolphe was wont to designate that very center of Paris—the Palais Royal—a spot where it is almost impossible to wait for a few minutes without meeting as many persons of your acquaintance—more particularly creditors. So Rodolphe took his stand on the steps of the Palais Royal. This time Providence was long in coming; but at last Rodolphe perceived a manifestation. It took the shape of a figure in a white hat and a green overcoat, and it carried a gold-headed cane—a very well-dressed Providence indeed.

Providence, in short, was a good-natured young fellow, and well to do, though a Socialist.

"I am delighted to see you," he said, as he encountered Rodolphe. "Come my way for a bit, and we will talk."

"Oh, come, I am condemned to the torture of Socialism," muttered Rodolphe, submitting to be dragged along by the owner of the white hat, who, indeed, badgered him without mercy. As they reached the Pont des Arts Rodolphe interrupted him.

"I must go; I have not the wherewithal to pay this toll."

"Pooh!" said the other, throwing two sous to the pensioner.

"Now for it!" thought the editor of the *Iris* as they crossed the river and arrived at the other end. He suddenly stopped short at sight of the clock at the Institut, and waved his hand despairingly toward the dial, crying:

"Confound it! A quarter to five! It is all over with me!"

"What is the matter?" asked the other in surprise.

"Just this," said Rodolphe: "you have dragged me over here in spite of myself, and, thanks to you, I have missed an appointment."

"Was it important?"

"I should think it was! I was to call for some money at five o'clock at the Batignolles; I shall never do it. Oh, confound it all! What am I to do?"

"Bless your life, it is very simple," said the Socialist. "Come home with me; I will lend you the amount."

"Impossible! You live over at Montrouge, and I have business in the Chaussée d'Antin at six o'clock. Confound it all!"

"I have a little small change about me," Providence began timidly, "only a very little."

"If I had enough to pay my cab fare,

I might possibly arrive at the Batignolles in time."

"That is all I have, my dear boy—thirty-one sous."

"Let me have it—quick, for I must be off," said Rodolphe. The clock had just struck five, and he ran as fast as he could to the trysting place.

"It has been hard to come by," he reflected, as he counted over his small change. "One hundred sous; good as gold. After all, I am ready. Laure shall see that she has to do with a man who understands how to do things properly. I will not take a single centime home with me to-night. It is incumbent on me to rehabilitate literature and to prove that men of letters lack only money to be rich."

Mademoiselle was true to her tryst.

"That is right!" said he. "Punctual as Bréguet's watches!"

They spent the rest of the evening together, and Rodolphe's spirited efforts melted his five francs in the crucible of prodigality. Mademoiselle Laure was fascinated by his manner, and was kind enough not to notice that Rodolphe was not taking her home until he reached his own door and brought her in.

"I am doing wrong," said she. "Never make me repent it by showing the ingratitude which is the appanage of your sex."

"Madame," said Rodolphe, "I am well known for my constancy. I carry it, indeed, to such a point that my friends all wonder at my fidelity and have nicknamed me 'a General Bertrand in love.'"

To what a sublimity of childishness does love attain.—*Alexandre Dumas.*

Love is the blossom where there blows
Everything that lives or grows;
Love doth make the heavens to move,
And the sun doth burn in love;
Love the strong and weak doth yoke,
And makes the ivy climb the oak.—*Giles Fletcher.*

A jealous woman believes everything her passion suggests.—*John Gay.*

Fine manners show themselves formidable to the uncultivated man.—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

Women are cruel critics, and we like them to be so; for, besides the guard which a man places round his own harem, and the defenses which a woman has in her heart, her faith, and honor, hasn't she all her own friends of her own sex to keep watch that she does not go astray, and to tear her to pieces if she is found erring? When our Mahmouds or Selims of Baker Street or Belgrave Square visit their Fatimas with condign punishment, their mothers sew up Fatima's sack for her, and her sisters and sisters-in-law see her well under water.—*William Makepeace Thackeray.*

An Echo From Horace

By Richard Le Gallienne

Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti:
Tempus abire tibi est.

TAKE away the dancing girls, quench the lights, remove
Golden cups and garlands sere, all the feast; away
Lutes and lyres and Lalage; close the gates, above
Write upon the lintel this: Time is done for play!
Thou hast had thy fill of love, eaten, drunk; the show
Ends at last; 'twas long enough—time it is to go.

Thou has played—ah! heart, how long! Past all count were they—
Girls of gold and ivory, bosomed deep, all snow,
Leopard swift and velvet loined, bronze for hair, mild clay
Turning at a touch to flame, tense as a strung bow;
Cruel as a circling hawk, tame at last as dove:
Thou hast had thy fill and more than enough of love.

Thou hast eaten peacocks' tongues, fed thy carp with slaves,
Nests of Asiatic birds, brought from far Cathay,
Umbrian boars, and mullet roes, snatched from stormy waves,
Half thy father's lands have gone one strange meal to pay;
For a morsel on thy plate ravished sea and shore;
Thou hast eaten, 'tis enough—thou shalt eat no more.

Thou hast drunk—how hast thou drunk!—mighty vats, whole seas,
Vineyards purpling half a world turned to gold thy throat,
Falernian, true Massic, the gods' own vintages,
Lakes thou swallowed, deep enough galleys tall to float;
Wildness, wonder, wisdom, all, drunkenness divine,
All that dreams within the grape, madness, too, were thine.

Time it is to go and sleep—draw the curtains close!
Tender strings shall lure thee still, mellow flutes be blown,
Still the spring shall shower down on thy couch the rose,
Still the laurels crown thy head where thou dreamst alone.
Thou didst play, and thou didst eat, thou hast drunken deep:
Time at last it is to go, time it is to sleep.

by

Stacy Aumonier

Author of "The Golden Windmill" and "One after Another"

OLD IRON

YOU know how the story goes, of course. Husband and wife just about to retire to bed. Wife yawns; husband knocks out his pipe on the grate and remarks:

"Well, better turn in, I suppose."

Wife replies:

"Yes;" then adds languidly: "I meant to call round to ask the Cartwrights to dinner on Thursday."

Husband, after prolonged pause:

"I'll pop round and ask them now, if you like. They never go to bed till very late."

"I wish you would, dear."

Husband pulls on a cloth cap and goes out. Wife yawns again, and picks up "The Ladies' Boudoir," and idly examines charmeuse gown, and notes the prices of gloves at Foxtrot's & Fieldfern's. Yawns again more audibly. Collects sewing and places it in work basket. Takes the kitten out and locks it up in the scullery. Yawns, and walks languidly upstairs. Turns on the light and spends fifteen minutes examining face at various angles in the glass. Begins to disrobe. Thinks sleepily: "Tom's a long time." Brushes out her hair and admires it considerably. Conceives a new way of dressing it for future festivities. Disrobes further. Yawns. Disrobes completely and rerobes—dressing gown.

"It's too bad being all this time!"

Vitality slightly stirred in the direction of resentment and a kind of mild apprehension. Lies on the bed and drowsily reviews the experiences of the day. Dreams. Suddenly starts with a consciousness of cold. Gropes for her wrist watch. *A quarter past one!* Jumps from the bed, feeling the cold hand of fear on her heart. Runs downstairs and stares helplessly out of the front door. Pauses to consider a thousand possible eventualities. Returns to bedroom and completely rerobes, not forgetting to do her hair neatly and powder her nose. Puts on cloak and goes out. Cartwrights' house all in darkness. Bangs on the front door and rings bell. Head of old Mr. Cartwright at first-floor window:

"Who the devil's that?"

"It's me. Where's Tom?"

"Tom! Haven't seen him for weeks!"

"Good God! Let me in."

Cartwright family aroused. Panic. Fainting scene in drawing-room. Brandy, smelling salts and eau de Cologne. Young George Cartwright mounts his bicycle—rides to the police station; on the way talks to policeman on point duty. No, no one heard anything of a thin man with a snuff-colored mustache. At police station, no accidents so far reported. Chief inspector will make a note and await developments. Night passes, and the following day. No news.

Weeks, months, years elapse. Eight years slide easily by. The wife survives her grief. She marries the local organist, a blond and commendable young man. They continue to live in the wife's house. Children gather round her knee. One, two, three, twins, an interval, six, seven handsome blond children. They grow up.

Twenty-two years elapse. They are sitting at tea. The father, the mother and the oldest son, a handsome young man in a gray flannel suit.

Everything perfect. Suddenly the door opens, and an old man in a long gray beard and perambulating manner wanders into the room. He stares at the wife, and mumbles:

"Did you say Thursday or Friday? My memory is not what it was."

And the wife stares at the old man, and then at the blond organist. And the blond organist stares at the mother of his beautiful children, and then at the bearded interloper. And they all stare at each other and feel very embarrassed.

The story is familiar to you? Well, perhaps so. It is the story of the eternal triangle, the most useful pattern of geometrical forms in the construction of a romantic pattern.

Heigh-ho! The trouble with human triangles is that they are never equilateral. Two sides together are invariably greater than the third side.

Jim Canning was the third side of a triangle, and he got flattened out. In fact, his wife used to flatten him out on every possible occasion. She was bigger than he, and she was aided by the *tertium quid*, Ted Woollams, who was nothing more or less than a professional pugilist. What was Jim to do? In every well-conducted epic the hero performs physical feats which leave you breathless. He is always tall and strong, and a bit too quick with the rapier for any villain who crosses his path. But what about a hero who is small and elderly, of poor physique, short-sighted, asthmatical, with corns which impede his gait? You may say that he has no place in the heroic arena. He should clear out, go and get on with his job, and leave heroism to people who know how to manage the stuff. And yet there was something heroic in the heart of Jim Canning: a quick sympathy, and an instinct for self-sacrifice.

He used to keep a second-hand furniture shop, which, you must understand, is a very different thing from an antique shop. Jim's furniture had no determinate character such as that which associated with the name of Chippendale, Sheraton or Heppelwhite. It was just "furniture." Well-worn sofas, broken chairs and tables, mattresses with the stuffing exuding from holes, rusty brass beds with the knobs missing, broken pots and mirrors and dumb-bells; even clothes, and screws, false teeth and bird cages, and ancient umbrellas. But his specialty was old iron. Trays and trays and baskets filled with scraps of old iron.

His establishment used to be known in Camden Town at that time as the Muck Shop. At odd times of the day you might observe his small, pathetic

figure trundling a barrow laden with the spoils of some hard-pressed inhabitant. What a tale the little shop seemed to tell! Struggle and poverty, homes broken up, drink, ugly passions, desperate sacrifices—a battered array of the symbols of distress. And, somehow, in his person these stories seemed to be embodied. One felt that he was sorry for the people whose property he bought. He was always known as a fair dealer. He paid a fair price and never took advantage of ignorance.

His marriage was a failure from the very first. She was a big, strapping woman, the daughter of a local greengrocer. Twelve years younger than Jim, vain, frivolous, empty-headed and quarrelsome. Her reasons for marrying him were obscure. Probably she had arrived at the time when she wanted to marry, and Jim was regarded as a successful shopkeeper who could keep her in luxury. He was blinded by her physical attractions, and tried his utmost to believe that his wife was everything to be desired. Disillusionment came within the first month of their married life, at the moment, indeed, when Clara realized that her husband's business was not so thriving as she had been led to believe. She immediately accused him of deceiving her. Then she began to sulk and neglect him. She despised his manner of conducting business—his conscientiousness and sense of fair dealing.

"If you'd put some ginger into it," she once remarked, "and not always be thinking about the feelings of the tripe you buy from, we might have a house in the Camden Road and a couple of servants."

This had never been Jim's ambition. Many years ago he had attended a sale at Shorwell Green, on the borders of Sussex, a glorious spot near the downs, amidst lime trees and little running streams. It had been the dream of his life that one day he would retire there, with the woman he loved—and her children. When he put the matter to Clara, she laughed him to scorn.

"Not half!" she said. "Catch me living among butterflies and blinking cows. The Camden Road is my game."

Jim sighed, and went on trundling his barrow. Well, there it was! If the woman he had married desired it, he must do what she wanted. In any case it was necessary to begin to save. But with Clara he found it exceedingly difficult to begin to save. She idled her day away, bought trinkets, neglected her domestic offices, went to the pictures, and sucked sweets. Any attempt to point out to her the folly of her ways only led to bitter recriminations, tears and savage displays of temper, even physical violence to her husband.

Then there came a day when Jim fondly believed that the conditions of their married life would be ameliorated. A child was born, a girl, and they called her Annie. Annie became the apple of his eye. He would hurry back from the shop to attend at Annie's bath. He would creep in at night and kiss the warm skin of her little skull. He would think of her as he pottered around amidst his broken chairs and tables and utter little croons of anticipatory pleasure. Annie! She would grow up and be the mainstay of his life. He would work and struggle for her. Her life should be a path of roses and happiness. His wife, too, appeared to improve upon the advent of Annie. For a time the baby absorbed her. She displayed a kind of wild animal joy in its existence. She nursed it and fondled it, and did not seem to resent the curtailment of her pleasures. It was an additional mouth to feed; nevertheless their expenses did not seem to greatly increase, owing probably to Clara's modified way of living.

Four years of comparative happiness followed. Jim began to save. Oh! very slowly; very, very slowly. He still had less than three hundred pounds put on

one side for—that vague future of settled security. But still it was a solid beginning. In another ten or fifteen years he would still be—well, not quite an old man; an active man, he hoped. If he could save only one hundred pounds a year!

It was at this point that Ted Woollams appeared on the scene. He was the son of a manager of a swimming bath. On Sundays he used to box in "Fairyland" for purses of various amounts—he was a redoubtable middleweight. During the week he swaggered about Camden Town in new check suits, his fingers glittering with rings. He met Clara one evening at a public dance. The mutual attraction appears to have been instantaneous. They danced together the whole evening, and he saw her home.

And then began the squeezing of the third side of the triangle. Jim was not strong enough for them. At first he professed to see nothing in the friendship. He described Ted as "a jolly young fellow, a great pal of my wife's." And Ted treated him with a certain amount of respect. He called in at odd times, stayed to meals, drank Jim's beer, and smoked Jim's tobacco. The triangle was quite intact. It was Annie who caused the first disruption. She disliked the prize fighter, and screamed at the sight of him. This led to reprisals when he had gone, and Jim's championship of the child did not help to cement the always doubtful nature of the affection between husband and wife.

A few days later, Ted Woollams called in a great state of agitation. He wished to see Jim alone. It appeared that a wonderful opportunity had occurred to him. It was a complicated story about a quantity of bonded brandy which he had a chance of acquiring and selling at an enormous profit. He wanted to borrow fifty pounds till Saturday week, when he would pay Jim back sixty. Jim said he would lend him the fifty, but he didn't want any interest.

When Saturday week came, Ted said the deal had fallen through, but he would let him have the money back the following Saturday. In the meantime he came to supper nearly every night. Sometimes he drank too much beer.

Then Clara began to dress for the part. She bought expensive frocks, and had the account sent in to Jim. She neglected the child.

The months drifted by, and Ted was always going to pay, but he became more and more part and parcel of the household. Jim's savings began to dwindle. He protested to both his wife and Ted, but they treated him with indifference. The boxer began to abuse his familiarity. He would frequently tell Jim that he was not wanted in the drawing-room after supper. This lopsided triangle held together for nearly four years. Jim was unhappy and distracted.

He did not know how to act. He could not leave his wife, for the sake of the child. If he turned her out—and he had no legal power to do so—she would probably take Annie with her. And the child was devoted to him. They were great friends, and it was only this friendship which prevented him indulging in some mad act. Several times he ordered Woollams out of the house and forbade him to come again, but the boxer laughed at him and called him an old fool. He knew that his wife was practically keeping the man. They went to cinemas together, and often disappeared for the whole day, but she always returned at night, although it was sometimes two or three in the morning before she did so. Jim had no proof of actual unfaithfulness. Neither could he afford to hire detectives, a course of action which in any case appeared to him distasteful. Far from saving a hundred pounds a year, he was spending more

than his income. His savings had dwindled to barely forty pounds.

During a great period of his life Jim had enjoyed an unaccountable but stanch friendship with a gentleman named Isaac Rubens. Isaac Rubens was a Jew in a slightly similar way of business himself, and he conducted a thriving house at the corner of the Holy Angel Road. Isaac was in many respects a very remarkable man. Large, florid, and puffy, with keen, eagle eyes and an enormous nose, he was a man of profound knowledge of the history and value of *objets d'art*. He was moreover a man of his word. He was never known to give or accept a written contract and never known to break a verbal one. The friendship between these two was in many respects singular. Isaac was a keen man of business, and Jim was of very little use to him. Isaac's furniture was the real thing, with names and pedigrees. He did not deal in old iron but in stones and jewels and ornaments. Nevertheless he seemed to find in Jim's society a certain pleasure.

Sometimes after supper they would call on each other and smoke a pipe and discuss the vagaries of their calling, or the more abstract problems of life and death.

When this trouble came upon Jim he immediately repaired to his friend's house and told him the whole story.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! This is a bad business! A bad business!" exclaimed Isaac, when it was over. His moist eyes glowed amidst the general humidity of his face. "How can I advise you? An erring wife is the curse of God. You cannot turn her away without knowledge. Thank God, my Lena—— But there! among my people such lapses are rare. You have no evidence of unfaithfulness?"

"No."

"You must be gentle with her—but firm. Point out the error of her ways."

"I am always doing that, Isaac."

"She may get over it—a passing infatuation. Such things happen."

"If it wasn't for the child!"

"Yes, yes, I understand. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Very distressing, my friend. If I can be of any assistance——"

He thrust out his large hands helplessly. It is the kind of trouble in which no man can help another, and each knew it. Jim hovered by the door.

"It's nice to have some one to—talk to, anyway," he muttered; then he picked up his cap and shuffled away, calling out:

"Old iron! Old iron!"

Annie was nine when the climax came. An intelligent, pretty child, with dark hair and quick, impulsive manners. Her passionate preference for her father did not tend to smooth the troubles of the household. She attended the grammar school and had many girl friends. She saw very little of her mother.

One evening Jim returned home late. He had been on a visit to his friend, Isaac. He found Annie seated on the bottom stair, in her nightdress. Her face was very pale and set, her eyes bright. She had been crying. When she saw her father she gasped:

"Daddy! Oh, daddy!"

He seized her in his arms and whispered:

"What is it, my dear?"

Then she cried quietly while he held her. He did not attempt to hurry her. At last she got her voice under control and gasped quietly:

"I had gone to bed. I don't know why it was. I got restless in bed. I came down again softly. I peeped into the sitting room—— Oh, daddy!"

"What? What, my love?"

"That man—that man and——"

"Your mother?"

"Yes."

"He was——"

"He was kissing her and—— Oh!"

Jim clutched his child and pressed her head against his breast.

"I went in. He *struck* me."

"What!"

"He struck me because I wouldn't promise not to tell."

"He struck you, eh? He struck you! That man struck you, eh?"

"Yes, daddy."

"Where is he?"

"They're—up there now. I'm frightened."

"Go to bed, my love. Go to bed."

He carried her up the stairs and fondled her, and put her into bed.

"It's all right, my love. Go to sleep. Pleasant dreams. It's all right. Daddy will look after you."

Then he went downstairs.

A shout of laughter greeted him through the door of the sitting room. He gripped the handle and walked deliberately in. Ted Woollams was stretching himself luxuriously on the sofa. His heavy, sensual face appeared puffy and a little mussed. Clara was lying back in an easy-chair, smoking a cigarette. Jim did not speak. He walked up to Ted and without any preliminary explanation struck him full on the nose with his clenched fist. For a moment the boxer appeared more surprised than anything. His eyes narrowed, then the pain of the blow appeared to sting him. He rose from the sofa with a growl. As he advanced upon Jim, the latter thought:

"He's going to kill me. What a fool I was not to strike him with a poker!"

He thrust out his arms in an ineffectual defense. There was something horribly ugly, ugly and revolting in the animallike lurch of the man bearing down on him—the demon of an inevitable doom. Jim struck wildly at the other's arms, at the same time thinking:

"My little girl! I promised to look after her."

A jarring blow above the heart staggered him, and as he began to crumple forward he had a quick vision of the more destroying fate, the something which came crashing to his jaw. He heard his wife scream; then darkness enveloped him.

A long and very confused period followed. His glimpses of consciousness were intermittent and accompanied by pain. He heard people talking, and they appeared strangers to him. There was a lot of talking going on, quarreling, perhaps. When he was once more a complete master of his brain he realized abruptly that he was in the ward of a hospital. His jaw was strapped up tight and was giving him great pain; a nurse was feeding him through a silver tube. Two of his teeth were missing. He wanted to talk to her, but found he could not speak. Then he recalled the incident of his calamity. Well, there it was. He had been brought up in a hard school. Old iron! The instinct of self-preservation prompted him to bide his time. Doubtless his jaw was broken; a long job, but he would get well again. At the end of the journey Annie awaited him. What was the child doing now? Who was looking after her? He passed through periods of mental anguish and misgiving, and then long periods of drowsy immobility. Night succeeded day. To his surprise, on the following afternoon, his wife appeared. She came and sat by the bed, and said:

"Going on all right?"

He nodded. She looked uneasily round, then whispered:

"You needn't have taken on like that. Ted's going off to America, to-morrow—fulfilling engagements."

Jim stared at the ceiling, then closed his eyes. Ted no longer interested him. He wanted Annie, and he could not ask for her. Clara stayed a few moments, chatted with the nurse, and vanished. Why had she come? Later on, he was removed to the operating theater, and they reset his jaw. The shift of time again became uncertain. A long while later he remembered a

kindly-faced man in a white overall saying:

"Well, old chap, who struck you this blow?"

He bent his ear down to Jim's lips, and the latter managed to reply:

"A stranger."

Isaac came, humid and concerned, and pressed his hand.

"Well, well, I've found you, old friend! A neighbor told me. Distressing indeed. They say you must not talk. Well, what can I do?"

Jim indicated with his hands that he wished to write something down. Isaac produced an envelope and a pencil, and he wrote:

Go and see my little gal Annie. Send her to me. Keep an eye on her.

Isaac nodded gravely, and went away.

There appeared an eternity of time before the child came, but when she did all his dark forebodings vanished. She came smiling up the ward, and kissed him. They held each other's hands for a long time before she spoke.

"They would not tell me where you were. It was old Mr. Rubens. Oh, daddy, are you getting better?"

Yes, he was getting better. Much better. During the last two minutes he had improved enormously. He felt that he could speak. He managed to mumble:

"How are you, my love?"

"All right. Mother has been very cross. That horrid man has gone away. Mr. Rubens said you hurt your face. How did it happen, daddy?"

"I slipped on the stairs, my dear, and fell."

Annie's eyes opened very wide, but she did not speak. He knew by her manner that she did not believe him. At the back of her eyes there still lurked something of that horror which haunted them on the night when she had discovered "that horrid man" embracing her mother. It was the same night that her father "slipped on the stairs." The child was too astute to dissociate the two incidents, but she did not want to distress him.

"I shall come every day," she announced.

He smiled gratefully, and she stayed and chatted with him until the sister proclaimed that visitors were to depart.

From that day the convalescence of Jim Canning, although slow, was assured. Apart from the broken jaw he had suffered a slight concussion owing to striking the back of his head against the wall when he fell. The hospital authorities could not get out of him how the accident happened. Annie and Isaac Rubens were regular visitors, but during the seven weeks he remained in hospital Clara only visited him twice, and that was to arrange about money. On the day that he was discharged he had drawn his last five pounds from the bank.

"Never mind, never mind," he thought to himself; "we'll soon get that back."

And within a few days he was again trundling his barrow along the streets, calling out in his rather high tremolo voice, "Old iron! Old iron!"

There followed after that a long period in the life of the Canning family which is usually designated as "humdrum." With the departure of Ted Woollams, Clara settled down into a listless prosecution of her domestic routine. She seldom spoke to her husband except to nag him, or to grumble about their reduced circumstances, and these for a time were in a very serious state. Debts had accumulated, and various odds and ends in the house had disappeared while he had been in hospital. Clara was still smartly dressed, but Annie's clothes, particularly her boots, were in a deplorable condition. But Jim set to work, leaving home in the morning at seven o'clock and often

not returning till eight or nine at night. For months the financial position remained precarious. A period of hunger, and ill-temper, and sudden ugly brawls. But gradually he began again to get it under control. Clara had not lost her taste for good living, but she was kept in check by the lack of means. She was furtive, sullen, and resentful. Jim insisted that whatever they had to go without, Annie was to continue with her schooling.

They never spoke of Ted Woollams, but Jim knew that he had only gone away for four or five months. Jim struggled on through the winter months, out in all weather in his thin and battered coat. Sometimes twinges of rheumatism distorted his face, but he mentioned it to no one, not even Isaac.

It was in April that a sudden and dramatic change came into Jim's life. One morning he was alone in the shop. It was raining, and no customers had been in for several hours. Jim was struggling with the unsolvable problem of getting things straight and sorted out. Beneath a bed he came across a jumble of indescribable things, bits of iron and broken pots, odd boots, sections of brackets—nameless, odd-shaped remnants covered with dust and grime. He sighed. He remembered this lot quite well. They had been a great disappointment to him. He had trundled his barrow all the way down to a sale in Greenwich, where he had been given the tip that there were some good things going. Owing to losing his way, he had arrived late, and all the plums had been devoured by rival dealers. He had picked up this lot at the end of the sale for a few shillings, not that they appealed to him as a good bargain, but because he did not want to feel that he had completely wasted his day. He had brought them back and dumped them under the bed, intending to go through them later on. That was many months ago, long before he had been to the hospital, and there they had remained ever since.

Jim's ideas of dusting were always a little perfunctory. With a small feather brush he flicked clouds of dust from one object to another. No; there was nothing here of any value, though that piece of torn embroidery might fetch five shillings, and the small oblong iron box which some one had painted inside and out a dark green might be worth a little more. He picked it up and examined it. A ridiculous notion to paint iron; but there! people were fools, particularly customers. Of course it might be copper or brass. In that case it would be worth more. He pulled out a long jackknife and scraped the surface. The paint was old but incredibly thick. It must have had a dozen coats or so. When he eventually got down to the surface he found a dark-blue color.

"Um!" thought Jim. "That's a funny thing."

And he scraped a little more, and found some brown and white.

"That's enamel," he said out loud. "An enamel box. Um! I'll show that to Isaac. An enamel box might be worth several pounds."

He put the box on one side, and continued tidying up. That evening, after supper, he wrapped the box up in a piece of newspaper and took it round to his friend.

Isaac adjusted his thickest glasses and examined the spot where Jim had scratched. Then he went to the door and called out:

"Lizzie, bring me some turpentine."

When the turpentine was brought, Isaac began to work away at the surface with a rag and penknife. His face was very red, but he made no remark except once to mutter:

"This paint alone is twenty or thirty years old."

It took him nearly half an hour to reveal a complete corner of the box. Then he sat back and examined it

through a microscope. Jim waited patiently. At last Isaac put it down and tapped the table.

"This," he said deliberately, "is a Limoges enamel box of the finest period. An amazing find! Where did you obtain it?"

"I bought it at a sale of the effects of an old lady named Brandt, at Greenwich. She died intestate, and had no relatives."

"You are in luck's way, Jim Canning."

"But why was it painted dark green?"

"There are many mysteries in our profession. It was probably stolen many years ago—possibly a century ago. The thief knew that the piece was too well known to attempt to dispose of for some time. So for security he painted it in order to hide it. Then something happened. He may have died or been sent to prison. The box passed into other hands. Nobody worried about it. It was just an old iron box. It has probably been lying in a lumber room for years."

"It's been lying in my shop for five months. Is it worth a great deal, Isaac?"

Isaac thoughtfully stroked his chin.

"I am of the opinion that if it is undamaged, and if the rest of it is up to the standard of this part we have disclosed, it is worth many thousand pounds."

Jim looked aghast.

"But I only gave six-and-sixpence for the lot."

"It is the fortune of our profession."

The upshot of it was that Jim left the box in Isaac's hands to deal with as he thought fit. At first Isaac wished to waive the question of commission, but when Jim pointed out that but for Isaac's superior knowledge he would probably have sold it for a five-pound note, the Jew agreed to sell it on a ten-per-cent basis. Fair bargaining on both sides.

Jim returned home, almost dazed by the news. Was it fair to obtain such a large sum of money in such a way? He had done nothing to deserve it. And yet—who should have it, if not he? The old lady had not even any relations. She was an eccentric who lived alone with a crowd of cats. An enamel box has no attraction to a cat.

He said nothing about his find to his wife or to Annie. He did not wish to buoy them up with false hopes. Perhaps, after all, Isaac might be mistaken, or he may have overvalued the object. A thousand pounds. A dazzling sum. Why, he could almost retire upon it to—Shorwell Green, where it was so quiet and peaceful. But no! Clara would not agree to that—the Camden Road! He detested the Camden Road, but still, there it was. Clara was his wife. It was only fair to consider her wishes, although they were so unhappy together. In any case, it would be a great relief; security for years to come.

He went back to his work as though nothing had happened. Weeks went by, and Jim heard nothing about the enamel box; and then, one morning, he received a note from Isaac asking him to call round at once.

When he entered his friend's shop he knew that something exceptional had happened. Isaac was excited. He glowed and smiled, and was almost jocular.

"Come into my little room," he said.

When they were seated, he elaborately produced a check from his vest pocket, and handed it across the table to Jim.

"Here is your little share. I have kept my commission."

It was a check for £4,140. Isaac had sold it for £4,600 to a well-known collector.

The rest of that day was like a dream to Jim. Truly, he returned and pretended to be busy. In the afternoon, he even went out and trundled his bar-

row, calling out, "Old iron! Old iron!" but he did it more by force of habit.

"I need not do this any more," he kept on thinking. His mind was occupied with many visions. It was a bright spring day, with light, fleecy clouds scudding above the chimney-pots. How beautiful it would be in that Sussex vale! The flowers would be out, and the young pollard willows reflected in the cool streams. Pleasant to lie on the bank and fish, and forget this grimy life. And Annie, racing hither and thither, picking the buttercups and marguerites, and nestling by his side. He could do all this! Freedom, by one of those queer twists of fate.

The day wore on, and he still continued his work in a dazed, preoccupied manner. When the evening came, a feeling of exhaustion crept over him. Yes, probably he was tired. He wanted a rest and change. How fortunate he was. And yet he dreaded breaking the news to Clara. She would immediately demand a complete social upheaval. A new house, new furniture, luxuries, and parties, and social excitements. He arrived home late. During supper he was very silent.

"I will tell her afterwards," he thought. Annie was in bed. She should be told to-morrow. But tonight it must be broken to Clara. After all, it was true, she *was* his wife. It was the fair thing to do. He tried to recall the moments of passion and tenderness of the early days of their honeymoon, but all the other ugly visions kept dancing before his eyes. He lighted his pipe and gazed around the untidy room. Perhaps she would improve. Perhaps the changed conditions would soften her, and make her more amenable. But still, she was his wife, and if she wished to live in the Camden Road, well——

It was nearly dark, and Clara went out of the room, humming. She seemed peculiarly cheerful to-night. Almost as if she knew. He fingered the check in his breast pocket. She had gone upstairs—probably to fetch a novel. She adored a certain kind of novel. When she came down, he would lay the check on the table, and say:

"Look, Clara; see what has happened to us!"

And then he would be a little tender with her, try and make her understand how he felt. They would start all over again.

And then happened a variant of that hypothetical case described at the beginning of this story. Only, in this case it was the woman who went out.

Jim was sitting there with his fingers on the check that was to be their means of reconciliation, and with the tears already banked in his unuttered speech, when Clara put her head in the door. She had her hat on. She said:

"I'm going to the post."

Jim removed his hand from his breast pocket. He sat back, and heard the door slam.

"I'll tell her when she comes in."

But Clara never came in. He waited half an hour, and then he thought:

"She's gone to some dissipation with a friend. Oh, well, I must wait up till she returns, I suppose. I'm sorry she has disappointed me on—a night like this, though."

He sat dreaming in the chair, till he became suddenly, painfully aware of cold. It was quite dark. He lighted the gas. It was one o'clock. He felt his heart beating with a physical dread. Something had happened to Clara. Perhaps she had been run over, at the very moment when everything was going to change for the better for her. He blundered his way out into the hall, where a gas jet flickered feebly, and groped for his overcoat. On it he found a note pinned. He turned up the gas higher, and read:

I'm going off to Ted Woollams. I'm sick of you, and the stinking little house. Ted's made a bit in America, and I give you the

address. You can do what you like about it, but it's no good you ever trying to get me back. CLARA.

It was characteristic of Jim Canning that this note made him cry. He was so sensitive to its utter callousness and ingratitude. Then he dabbed his eyes with his old red handkerchief, and went upstairs. He tapped on Annie's door, then he opened it and said quietly:

"Annie, it's all right, my dear. It's only me. May I come in?"

The sleeping child was awake abruptly. She held out her arms.

"I ought not to have woken you up, my love, only I felt a little—lonely. Annie, would you like to come away with me to a beautiful place in the country, where it's all woods and flowers, and little streams?"

"Oh, daddy, yes! And would there be lambs, too, and little black pigs, and brown calves?"

"Yes, my dear; all those things; and birds, too, and quietness, and freedom."

"But, daddy, could we?"

"Yes, dear; I've had some good fortune."

Annie was very wide awake now, and she sat up and clapped her hands.

"Oh, daddy, when can we go?"

"Quite soon, my dear. Perhaps in a few weeks."

When he had closed the door, he dabbed his eyes again, and thought:

"It was unthinking of me. I oughtn't to have woken her up, but—she is all I have."

A week later he wrote to Clara.

DEAR CLARA: I understand that for the last week you have been living with Ted Woollams. I do not criticize your action. We are all as God made us. I shall in the dew course take divorse proceedings not as an act of hostility to you but that you may marry the man of your choice and be respectable. I also shall share with you the result of a good deal last week in order that you may not want and so close with check for £2020. I think this fair. JIM.

It was Isaac who helped him over all the difficult problems which occurred at that time, and it was Isaac who persuaded him that he was overdoing the "fairness" to Clara. He said that under the circumstances he had no moral obligation to Clara, and that £500 would be lavish. So in the end Jim altered the check to that amount. It was Isaac who took over the little shop, which he used as a kind of dumping ground of his superfluous stock. And it was Isaac who, a year after, returned letters addressed to Jim in a handwriting he recognized, "Gone away. Address not known." And it was he who in later years bore the brunt of the wild invective of a drunken harridan who said that her husband had deserted her, and would not hand her any of the fortune he must have inherited. He shook his head sadly, and replied that he knew nothing. Mr. Canning and his daughter had left London. He thought they had gone to Australia.

When she had gone, he said to himself:

"It would distress Jim to know that a woman who had once been his wife had sunk to such a condition."

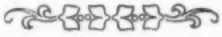
As he passed through to the room at the back he smiled and thought:

"How fortunate she did not come in here!"

On the table was a large bowl of red and white roses, with the label and card still lying on the table. On the card was inscribed:

With love to Uncle Isaac. A.

The postmark on the label was a village in Sussex.



WOMAN is by nature generally extravagant.—*Homer.*

by

Katherine Mansfield

Author of "Bliss" and "The Garden Party"

Marriage A La Mode

ON his way to the station William remembered with a fresh pang of disappointment that he was taking nothing down to the kiddies. Poor little chaps! It was hard lines on them. Their first words always were as they ran to greet him, "What have you got for me, daddy?" and he had nothing. He would have to buy them some sweets at the station. But that was what he had done for the past four Saturdays; their faces had fallen last time when they saw the same old boxes produced again.

And Paddy had said, "I had red ribbing on mine *bee*-fore!"

And Johnny had said, "It's always pink on mine. I hate pink."

But what was William to do? The affair wasn't so easily settled. In the old days, of course, he would have taken a taxi off to a decent toyshop and chosen them something in five minutes. But nowadays they had Russian toys, French toys, Serbian toys—toys from God knows where. It was over a year since Isabel had scrapped the old donkeys and engines and so on because they were so "dreadfully sentimental" and "so appallingly bad for the babies' sense of form."

"It's so important," the new Isabel had explained, "that they should like the right things from the very beginning. It saves so much time later on. Really, if the poor pets have to spend their infant years staring at these horrors, one can imagine them growing up asking to be taken to the Royal Academy."

And she spoke as though a visit to the Royal Academy was certain immediate death to any one.

"Well, I don't know," said William slowly. "When I was their age I used to go to bed hugging an old towel with a knot in it."

The new Isabel looked at him, her eyes narrowed, her lips apart.

"*Dear* William! I'm sure you did!" She laughed in the new way.

Sweets it would have to be, however, thought William gloomily, fishing in his pocket for change for the taxi man. And he saw the kiddies handing the boxes round—they were awfully generous little chaps—while Isabel's precious friends didn't hesitate to help themselves.

What about fruit? William hovered before a stall just inside the station. What about a melon each? Would they have to share that, too? Or a pineapple for Pad, and a melon for Johnny? Isabel's friends could hardly go sneaking up to the nursery at the children's mealtimes. All the same, as he bought the melon William had a horrible vision of one of Isabel's young poets lapping up a slice, for some reason, behind the nursery door.

With his two very awkward parcels he strode off to his train. The platform was crowded, the train was in. Doors banged open and shut. There came such a loud hissing from the engine that people looked dazed as they scurried to and fro. William made straight for a first-class smoker, stowed away his suit case and parcels, and taking a huge wad of papers out of his inner pocket, he flung down in the corner and began to read.

"Our client moreover is positive—— We are inclined to reconsider—— In the event of——" Ah, that was better. William pressed back his flattened hair and stretched his legs across the carriage floor. The familiar dull gnawing in his breast quietened down. "With regard to our decision——" He took out a blue pencil and scored a paragraph slowly.

Two men came in, stepped across him, and made for the farther corner. A young fellow swung his golf clubs into the rack and sat down opposite. The train gave a gentle lurch; they were off. William glanced up and saw the hot, bright station slipping away. A red-faced girl raced along by the carriages, there was something strained and almost desperate in the way she waved and called. "Hysterical!" thought William dully. Then a greasy, black-faced workman at the end of the platform grinned at the passing train. And William thought, "A filthy life!" and went back to his papers.

When he looked up again there were fields, and beasts standing for shelter under the dark trees. A wide river, with naked children splashing in the shallows, glided into sight and was gone again. The sky shone pale, and one bird drifted high like a dark fleck in a jewel.

"We have examined our client's correspondence files——" The last sentence he had read echoed in his mind. "We have examined——" William hung on to that sentence, but it was no good; it snapped in the middle, and the fields, the sky, the sailing bird, the water, all said, "Isabel." The same thing happened every Saturday afternoon. When he was on his way to meet Isabel there began those countless imaginary meetings. She was at the station, standing just a little apart from everybody else; she was sitting in the open taxi outside; she was at the garden gate; walking across the parched grass; at the door, or just inside the hall.

And her clear, light voice said, "It's William," or "Hillo, William!" or "So William has come!" He touched her cool hand, her cool cheek.

The exquisite freshness of Isabel! When he had been a little boy, it was his delight to run into the garden after a shower of rain and shake the rosebush over him. Isabel was that rosebush, petal soft, sparkling and cool. And he was still that little boy. But there was no running into the garden now, no laughing and shaking. The dull, persistent gnawing in his breast started

again. He drew up his legs, tossed the papers aside, and shut his eyes.

"What is it, Isabel? What is it?" he said tenderly. They were in their bedroom in the new house. Isabel sat on a painted stool before the dressing table that was strewn with little black and green boxes.

"What is what, William?" And she bent forward, and her fine, light hair fell over her cheeks.

"Ah, you know!" He stood in the middle of the strange room and he felt a stranger. At that Isabel wheeled round quickly and faced him.

"Oh, William!" she cried imploringly, and she held up the hairbrush. "Please! Please don't be so dreadfully stuffy and —tragic. You're always saying or looking or hinting that I've changed. Just because I've got to know really congenial people, and go about more, and am frightfully keen on—on everything, you behave as though I'd"—Isabel tossed back her hair and laughed—"killed our love or something. It's so awfully absurd"—she bit her lip—"and it's so maddening, William. Even this new house and the servants you grudge me."

"Isabel!"

"Yes, yes, it's true in a way," said Isabel quickly. "You think they are another bad sign. Oh, I know you do. I feel it," she said softly, "every time you come up the stairs. But we couldn't have gone on living in that other poky little hole, William. Be practical, at least! Why, there wasn't enough room for the babies even."

No, it was true. Every morning when he came back from chambers it was to find the babies with Isabel in the back drawing-room. They were having rides on the leopard skin thrown over the sofa back, or they were playing shops with Isabel's desk for a counter, or Pad was sitting on the hearthrug rowing away for dear life with a little brass fire shovel, while Johnny shot at pirates with the tongs. Every evening they each had a pick-a-back up the narrow stairs to their fat old Nanny.

Yes, he supposed it was a poky little house. A little white house with blue curtains and a window box of petunias. William met their friends at the door with "Seen our petunias? Pretty terrific for London, don't you think?"

But the imbecile thing, the absolutely extraordinary thing was that he hadn't the slightest idea that Isabel wasn't as happy as he. God, what blindness! He hadn't the remotest notion in those days that she really hated that inconvenient little house, that she thought the fat Nanny was ruining the babies, that she was desperately lonely, pining for new people and new music and pictures and so on. If they hadn't gone to that studio party at Moira Morrison's—if Moira Morrison hadn't said as they were leaving, "I'm going to rescue your wife, selfish man. She's like an exquisite little Titania"—if Isabel hadn't gone with Moira to Paris—if—if——

The train stopped at another station. Bettingford. Good heavens! They'd be there in ten minutes. William stuffed the papers back into his pockets; the young man opposite had long since disappeared. Now the other two got out. The late afternoon sun shone on women in cotton frocks and little sunburned, barefoot children. It blazed on a silky yellow flower with coarse leaves which sprawled over a bank of rock. The air ruffling through the window smelled of the sea. Had Isabel the same crowd with her this week-end, wondered William?

And he remembered the holidays they used to have, the four of them, with a little farm girl, Rose, to look after the babies. Isabel wore a jersey and her hair in a pleat; she looked about fourteen. Lord! how his nose used to peel! And the amount they ate, and the amount they slept in that immense feather bed with their feet locked to-

gether. William couldn't help a grim smile as he thought of Isabel's horror if she knew the full extent of his sentimentality.

"Hillo, William!" She was at the station after all, standing just as he had imagined, apart from the others, and—William's heart leaped—she was alone.

"Hallo, Isabel!" William stared. He thought she looked so beautiful that he had to say something. "You look very cool."

"Do I?" said Isabel. "I don't feel very cool. Come along, your horrid old train is late. The taxi's outside." She put her hand lightly on his arm as they passed the ticket collector. "We've all come to meet you," she said. "But we've left Bobby Kane at the sweet shop, to be called for."

"Oh!" said William. It was all he could say for the moment.

There in the glare waited the taxi, with Bill Hunt and Dennis Green sprawling on one side, their hats tilted over their faces, while on the other, Moira Morrison, in a bonnet like a huge strawberry, jumped up and down.

"No ice! No ice! No ice!" she shouted gayly.

And Dennis chimed in from under his hat, *"Only* to be had from the fishmonger's."

And Bill Hunt, emerging, added, "With *whole* fish in it."

"Oh, what a bore!" wailed Isabel. And she explained to William how they had been chasing round the town for ice while she waited for him. "Simply everything is running down the steep cliffs into the sea, beginning with the butter."

"We shall have to anoint ourselves with the butter," said Dennis. "May thy head, William, lack not ointment."

"Look here," said William, "how are we going to sit? I'd better get up by the driver."

"No, Bobby Kane's by the driver," said Isabel. "You're to sit between Moira and me." The taxi started. "What have you got in those mysterious parcels?"

"De-cap-it-ated heads!" said Bill Hunt, shuddering beneath his hat.

"Oh, fruit!" Isabel sounded very pleased. "Wise William! A melon and a pineapple. How too nice!"

"No, wait a bit," said William, smiling. But he really was anxious. "I brought them down for the kiddies."

"Oh, my dear!" Isabel laughed, and slipped her hand through his arm. "They'd be rolling in agonies if they were to eat them. No"—she patted his hand—"you must bring them something next time. I refuse to part with my pineapple."

"Cruel Isabel! Do let me smell it!" said Moira. She flung her arms across William appealingly. "Oh!" The strawberry bonnet fell forward: she sounded quite faint.

"A Lady in Love with a Pineapple," said Dennis, as the taxi drew up before a little shop with a striped blind. Out came Bobby Kane, his arms full of little packets.

"I do hope they'll be good. I've chosen them because of the colors. There are some round things which really look too divine. And just look at this nougat," he cried ecstatically; "just look at it! It's a perfect little ballet."

But at that moment the shopman appeared. "Oh, I forgot. They're none of them paid for," said Bobby, looking frightened. Isabel gave the shopman a note, and Bobby was radiant again. "Hallo, William! I'm sitting by the driver." And bareheaded, all in white, with his sleeves rolled up to the shoulders, he leaped into his place. *"Avanti!"* he cried.

After tea the others went off to bathe, while William stayed and made his peace with the kiddies. But Johnny

and Paddy were asleep, the rose-red glow had paled, bats were flying, and still the bathers had not returned. As William wandered downstairs, the maid crossed the hall carrying a lamp. He followed her into the sitting room. It was a long room, colored yellow. On the wall opposite William some one had painted a young man, over life size, with very wabbly legs, offering a wide-eyed daisy to a young woman who had one very short arm and one very long, thin one. Over the chairs and sofa there hung strips of black material, covered with big splashes like broken eggs, and everywhere one looked there seemed to be an ash tray full of cigarette ends. William sat down in one of the armchairs. Nowadays, when one felt with one hand down the sides, it wasn't to come upon a sheep with three legs or a cow that had lost one horn, or a very fat dove out of the Noah's Ark. One fished up yet another little paper-covered book of smudged-looking poems. He thought of the wad of papers in his pocket, but he was too hungry and tired to read. The door was open; sounds came from the kitchen. The servants were talking as if they were alone in the house. Suddenly there came a loud screech of laughter and an equally loud "Sh!" They had remembered him. William got up and went through the French windows into the garden, and as he stood there in the shadow he heard the bathers coming up the sandy road; their voices rang through the quiet.

"I think it's up to Moira to use her little arts and wiles."

A tragic moan from Moira.

"We ought to have a gramophone for the week-ends that played 'The Maid of the Mountains.'"

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" cried Isabel's voice. "That's not fair to William. Be nice to him, my children! He's only staying until to-morrow evening."

"Leave him to me," cried Bobby Kane. "I'm awfully good at looking after people."

The gate swung open and shut. William moved on the terrace; they had seen him.

"Hallo, William!" And Bobby Kane, flapping his towel, began to leap and pirouette on the parched lawn. "Pity you didn't come, William. The water was divine. And we all went to a little pub afterward and had sloe gin."

The others had reached the house. "I say, Isabel," called Bobby, "would you like me to wear my Nijinsky dress to-night?"

"No," said Isabel, "nobody's going to dress. We're all starving. William's starving, too. Come along, *mes amis*, let's begin with sardines."

"I've found the sardines," said Moira, and she ran into the hall, holding a box high in the air.

"A Lady with a Box of Sardines," said Dennis gravely.

"Well, William, and how's London?" asked Bill Hunt, drawing the cork out of a bottle of whisky.

"Oh, London's not much changed," answered William.

"Good old London," said Bobby, very hearty, spearing a sardine.

But a moment later William was forgotten. Moira Morrison began wondering what color one's legs really were under water.

"Mine are the palest, palest mushroom color."

Bill and Dennis ate enormously. And Isabel filled glasses, and changed plates, and found matches, smiling blissfully. At one moment she said, "I do wish, Bill, you'd paint it."

"Paint what?" said Bill loudly, stuffing his mouth with bread.

"Us," said Isabel, "round the table. It would be so fascinating in twenty years' time."

Bill screwed up his eyes and chewed. "Light's wrong," he said rudely; "far too much yellow;" and went on eating.

And that seemed to charm Isabel, too. But after supper they were all so tired they could do nothing but yawn until it was late enough to go to bed.

It was not until William was waiting for his taxi the next afternoon that he found himself alone with Isabel. When he brought his suit case down into the hall, Isabel left the others and went over to him. She stooped down and picked up the suit case.

"What a weight!" she said, and she gave a little awkward laugh. "Let me carry it! To the gate."

"No, why should you?" said William. "Of course not. Give it to me."

"Oh, please do let me," said Isabel. "I want to, really." They walked together silently. William felt there was nothing to say now.

"There," said Isabel triumphantly, setting the suit case down, and she looked anxiously along the sandy road. "I hardly seem to have seen you this time," she said breathlessly. "It's so short, isn't it? I feel you've only just come. Next time——" The taxi came into sight. "I hope they look after you properly in London. I'm so sorry the babies have been out all day, but Miss Neil had arranged it. They'll hate missing you. Poor William, going back to London." The taxi turned. "Good-by!" She gave him a little hurried kiss; she was gone.

Fields, trees, hedges streamed by. They shook through the empty, blind-looking little town, ground up the steep pull to the station.

The train was in. William made straight for a first-class smoker, flung back into the corner, but this time he let the papers alone. He folded his arms against the dull, persistent gnawing, and began in his mind to write a letter to Isabel.

The post was late as usual. They sat outside the house in long chairs under colored parasols. Only Bobby Kane lay on the turf at Isabel's feet. It was dull, stifling; the day drooped like a flag.

"Do you think there will be Mondays in heaven?" asked Bobby childishly.

And Dennis murmured: "Heaven will be one long Monday."

But Isabel couldn't help wondering what had happened to the salmon they had for supper last night. She had meant to have fish mayonnaise for lunch and now——

Moira was asleep. Sleeping was her latest discovery. "It's *so* wonderful. One simply shuts one's eyes, that's all. It's *so* delicious."

When the old ruddy postman came beating along the sandy road on his tricycle one felt the handlebars ought to have been oars.

Bill Hunt put down his book. "Letters," he said complacently, and they all waited. But, heartless postman—O malignant world! There was only one, a fat one for Isabel. Not even a paper.

"And mine's only from William," said Isabel mournfully.

"From William—already?"

"He's sending you back your marriage lines as a gentle reminder."

"Does everybody have marriage lines? I thought they were only for servants."

"Pages and pages! Look at her! A Lady Reading a Letter," said Dennis

My darling, precious Isabel. Pages and pages there were. As Isabel read on her feeling of astonishment changed to a stifled feeling. What on earth had induced William—— How extraordinary it was! What could have made him? She felt confused, more and more excited, even frightened. It was just like William. Was it? It was absurd, of course, it must be absurd, ridiculous. "Ha, ha, ha! Oh, dear!" What was she to do? Isabel flung back in her chair and laughed till she couldn't stop laughing.

"Do, do tell us," said the others. "You must tell us."

"I'm longing to," gurgled Isabel. She sat up, gathered the letter, and waved it at them. "Gather round," she said. "Listen, it's too marvelous. A love letter!"

"A love letter! But how divine! *'Darling precious Isabel!'* " But she had hardly begun before their laughter interrupted her.

"Go on, Isabel, it's perfect."

"It's the most marvelous find."

"Oh, do go on, Isabel!"

"God forbid, my darling, that I should be a drag on your happiness."

"Oh! oh! oh!"

"Sh! sh! sh!"

And Isabel went on. When she reached the end they were hysterical; Bobby rolled on the turf and almost sobbed.

"You must let me have it just as it is, entire, for my new book," said Dennis firmly. "I shall give it a whole chapter."

"Oh, Isabel," moaned Moira, "that wonderful bit about holding you in his arms!"

"I always thought those letters in divorce cases were made up. But they pale before this."

"Let me hold it. Let me read it, mine own self," said Bobby Kane.

But, to their surprise, Isabel crushed the letter in her hand. She was laughing no longer. She glanced quickly at them all; she looked exhausted. "No, not just now. Not just now," she stammered.

And before they could recover she had run into the house, through the hall, up the stairs into her bedroom. Down she sat on the side of the bed. "How vile, odious, abominable, vulgar!" muttered Isabel. She pressed her eyes with her knuckles and rocked to and fro. And again she saw them, but not four, more like forty, laughing, sneering, jeering, stretching out their hands while she read them William's letter. Oh, what a loathsome thing to have done! How could she have done it! *"God forbid, my darling, that I should be a drag on your happiness."* William! Isabel pressed her face into the pillow. But she felt that even the grave bedroom knew her for what she was, shallow, tinkling, vain.

Presently from the garden below there came voices.

"Isabel, we're all going for a bath. Do come!"

"Come, thou wife of William!"

"Call her once before you go, call once yet!"

Isabel sat up. Now was the moment, now she must decide. Would she go with them, or stay here and write to William? Which, which should it be? "I must make up my mind." Oh, but how could there be any question? Of course she would stay here and write.

"Titania!" piped Moira.

"Isa-bel?"

No, it was too difficult. "I'll—I'll go with them, and write to William later. Some other time. Later. Not now. But I shall *certainly* write," thought Isabel hurriedly.

And, laughing in the new way, she ran down the stairs.

HE who is about to marry is on his way to repentance.—*Greek Proverb.*

CHANGE everything, except your loves.—*Voltaire.*

WOMAN brings to man his greatest blessing and his greatest plague.—*Euripides.*

by O. Henry

Author of "The Proof of the Pudding"

THIMBLE, THIMBLE

THESE are the directions for finding the office of Carteret & Carteret, Mill Supplies and Leather Belting.

You follow the Broadway trail down until you pass the Crosstown Line, the Bread Line, and the Dead Line, and come to the Big Cañons of the Money-grubber Tribe. Then you turn to the left, to the right, dodge a push-cart and the tongue of a two-ton, four-horse dray and hop, skip, and jump to a granite ledge on the side of a twenty-one-story synthetic mountain of stone and iron. In the twelfth story is the office of Carteret & Carteret. The factory where they make the mill supplies and leather belting is in Brooklyn. Those commodities —to say nothing of Brooklyn— not being of interest to you, let us hold the incidents within the confines of a one-act, one-scene play, thereby lessening the toil of the reader and the expenditure of the publisher. So, if you have the courage to face four pages of type and Carteret & Carteret's office boy, Percival, you shall sit on a varnished chair in the inner office and peep at the little comedy of the Old Nigger Man, the Hunting-case Watch, and the Open-faced Question—mostly borrowed from the late Mr. Frank Stockton, as you will conclude.

The Carterets were, or was—Columbia College professors please rule—an old Virginia family. Long time ago the gentlemen of the family had worn lace ruffles and carried tinless foils and owned plantations and had slaves to burn. But the war had greatly reduced their holdings—of course you can perceive at once that this flavor has been shoplifted from Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith, in spite of the "et" after "Carter"—well, anyhow:

In digging up the Carteret history I shall not take you farther back than the year 1620. The two original American Carterets came over in that year, but by different means of transportation. One brother, named John, came in the *Mayflower* and became a Pilgrim Father. You've seen his picture on the covers of the Thanksgiving magazines,

hunting turkeys in the deep snow with a blunderbuss. Blandford Carteret, the other brother, crossed the pond in his own brigantine, landed on the Virginia coast, and became an F. F. V. John became distinguished for piety and shrewdness in business; Blandford for his pride, juleps marksmanship, and vast, slave-cultivated plantations.

The Yankee Carterets went into business in New York long before the war. Their house, as far as Leather Belting and Mill Supplies was concerned, was as musty and arrogant and solid as one of those old East India tea importing concerns that you read about in Dickens. There were some rumors of a war behind its counters, but not enough to affect the business.

During and after the war, Blandford Carteret, F.F.V., lost his plantations, juleps, marksmanship, and life. He bequeathed little more than his pride to his surviving family. So it came to pass that Blandford Carteret, the Fifth, aged fifteen, was invited by the leather-and-mill-supplies branch of that name to come North and learn business instead of hunting foxes and boasting of the glory of his fathers on the reduced acres of his impoverished family. The boy jumped at the chance; and, at the age of twenty-five, sat in the office of the firm equal partner with John, the Fifth, of the blunderbuss-and-turkey branch.

The young men were about the same age, smooth of face, alert, easy of manner, and with an air that promised mental and physical quickness. They were razored, blue-serged, straw-hatted, and pearl-stick-pinned like other young New Yorkers who might be millionaires or bill clerks.

One afternoon at four o'clock, in the private office of the firm, Blandford Carteret opened a letter that a clerk had just brought to his desk. After reading it he chuckled audibly for nearly a minute. John looked around from his desk inquiringly.

"It's from mother," said Blandford. "I'll read you the funny part of it. She tells me all the neighborhood news first, of course, and then cautions me against getting my feet wet and musical comedies. After that come some vital statistics about calves and pigs and an estimate of the wheat crop. And now I'll quote some:

"'And what do you think! Old Uncle Jake, who was seventy-six last Wednesday, must go traveling. Nothing would do but he must go to New York and see his "young Master Blandford." Old as he is, he has a deal of common sense, so I've let him go. I couldn't refuse him—he seemed to have concentrated all his hopes and desires into this one adventure into the wide world. You know he was born on the plantation, and has never been ten miles away from it in his life. And he was your father's body servant during the war, and has been always a faithful vassal and servant of the family. He has often seen the gold watch—the watch that was your father's and your father's father's. I told him it was to be yours; and he begged me to allow him to take it to you and to put it into your hands himself.

"'So he has it, carefully inclosed in a buckskin case, and is bringing it to you with all the pride and importance of a king's messenger. I gave him money for the round trip and for a two weeks' stay in the city. I wish you would see to it that he gets comfortable quarters. Jake won't need much looking after—he's able to take care of himself. But I have read in the papers that African bishops and colored potentates generally have much trouble in obtaining food and lodging in the Yankee metropolis. That may be all right; but I don't see why the best hotel there shouldn't take Jake in. Still, I suppose it's a rule.

"'I gave him full directions about finding you, and packed his valise my-

self. You won't have to bother with him; but I do hope you'll see that he is made comfortable. Take the watch that he brings you—it's almost a decoration. It has been worn by true Carterets, and there isn't a stain upon it nor a false movement of the wheels. Bringing it to you is the crowning joy of old Jake's life. I wanted him to have that little outing and that happiness before it is too late. You have often heard us talk about how Jake, pretty badly wounded himself, crawled through the reddened grass at Chancellorsville to where your father lay with the bullet in his dear heart, and took the watch to keep it from the "Yanks."

"'So, my son, when the old man comes consider him as a frail but worthy messenger from the old-time life.

"'You have been so long away from home and so long among the people that we have always regarded as aliens that I'm not sure that Jake will know you when he sees you. But Jake has a keen perception, and I rather believe that he will know a Virginia Carteret at sight. I can't conceive that even ten years in Yankeeland could change a boy of mine. Anyhow, I'm sure you will know Jake. I put eighteen collars in his valise. If he should have to buy others, he wears a number 15½. Please see that he gets the right ones. He will be no trouble to you at all.

"'If you are not too busy, I'd like for you to find him a place to board where they have white-meal corn bread, and try to keep him from taking his shoes off in your office or on the street.

"'If you can spare the time, count his handkerchiefs when they come back from the wash. I bought him a dozen new ones before he left. He should be there about the time this letter reaches you. I told him to go straight to your office when he arrives.'"

As soon as Blandford had finished the reading of this, something happened—as there should happen in stories and must happen on the stage.

Percival, the office boy, with his air of despising the world's output of mill supplies and leather belting, came in to announce that a colored gentleman was outside to see Mr. Blandford Carteret.

"Bring him in," said Blandford.

John Carteret swung around in his chair and said to Percival: "Ask him to wait a few minutes outside. We'll let you know when to bring him in."

Then he turned to his cousin with one of those broad, slow smiles that was an inheritance of all the Carterets.

"Bland, I've always had a consuming curiosity to understand the differences that you haughty Southerners believe to exist between 'you all' and the people of the North. Of course I know that you consider yourselves made out of finer clay and look upon Adam as only a collateral branch of your ancestry; but I don't know why. I never could understand the differences between us."

"Well, John," said Blandford, laughing, "what you don't understand about it is just the difference, of course. I suppose it was the feudal way in which we lived that gave us our lordly, baronial airs and feeling of superiority."

"But you are not feudal now," went on John. "Since we licked you and stole your cotton and mules you've had to go to work just as we 'damyankees,' as you call us, have always been doing. And you're just as proud and exclusive and upper-classy as you were before the war. So it wasn't your money that caused it."

"Maybe it was the climate," said Blandford lightly; "or maybe our negroes spoiled us. I'll call old Jake in, now. I'll be glad to see the old villain again."

"Wait just a moment," said John. "I've got a little theory I want to test. You and I are pretty much alike in our general appearance. Old Jake hasn't seen you since you were fifteen. Let's

have him in, and play fair and see which of us gets the watch. The old darky surely ought to be able to pick out his 'young marster' without any trouble. The alleged aristocratic superiority of a 'reb' ought to be visible to him at once. He couldn't make the mistake of handing over the timepiece to a Yankee, of course. The loser buys the dinner this evening and two dozen 15½ collars for Jake. Is it a go?"

Blandford agreed heartily. Percival was summoned and told to usher the "colored gentleman" in.

Uncle Jake stepped inside the private office cautiously. He was a little old man, as black as soot, wrinkled and bald except for a fringe of white wool, cut decorously short, that ran over his ears and around his head. There was nothing of the stage "uncle" about him: his black suit nearly fitted him; his shoes shone, and his straw hat was banded with a gaudy ribbon. In his right hand he carried something carefully concealed by his closed fingers.

Uncle Jake stopped a few steps from the door. Two young men sat in their revolving desk chairs ten feet apart and looked at him in friendly silence. His gaze slowly shifted many times from one to the other. He felt sure that he was in the presence of one, at least, of the revered family among whose fortunes his life had begun and was to end.

One had the pleasing but haughty Carteret air; the other had the unmistakable straight, long family nose. Both had the keen black eyes, horizontal brows, and thin, smiling lips that had distinguished both the Carteret of the Mayflower and him of the brigantine. Old Jake had thought that he could have picked out his young master instantly from a thousand Northerners; but he found himself in difficulties. The best he could do was to use strategy.

"Howdy, Marse Blandford—howdy, suh?" he said, looking midway between the two young men.

"Howdy, Uncle Jake?" they both answered pleasantly and in unison. "Sit down. Have you brought the watch?"

Uncle Jake chose a hard-bottom chair at a respectful distance, sat on the edge of it, and laid his hat carefully on the floor. The watch in its buckskin case he gripped tightly. He had not risked his life on the battlefield to rescue that watch from his "old marster's" foes to hand it over again to the enemy without a struggle.

"Yes, suh; I got it in my hand, suh. I'm gwine give it to you right away in jus' a minute. Old Missis told me to put it in young Marse Blandford's hand and tell him to wear it for the family pride and honor. It was a mighty longsome trip for an old nigger man to make—ten thousand miles it must be back to old V'ginia, suh. You've growed mightily, young marster. I wouldn't have reconnized you but for yo' powerful resemblance to old marster."

With admirable diplomacy the old man kept his eyes roaming in the space between the two men. His words might have been addressed to either. Though neither wicked nor perverse, he was seeking for a sing.

Blandford and John exchanged winks.

"I reckon you done got yo' ma's letter," went on Uncle Jake. "She said she was gwine to write to you 'bout my comin' along up this er-way."

"Yes, yes, Uncle Jake," said John briskly. "My cousin and I have just been notified to expect you. We are both Carterets, you know."

"Although one of us," said Blandford, "was born and raised in the North."

"So if you will hand over the watch ——" said John.

"My cousin and I——" said Blandford.

"Will then see to it——" said John.

"That comfortable quarters are found for you," said Blandford.

With creditable ingenuity, Old Jake set up a cackling, high-pitched, protracted laugh. He beat his knee, picked up his hat and bent the brim in an apparent paroxysm of humorous appreciation. The seizure afforded him a mask behind which he could roll his eyes impartially between, above and beyond his two tormentors.

"I sees what," he chuckled after a while. "You gen'lemen is tryin' to have fun with the po' old nigger. But you can't fool old Jake. I knowed you, Marse Plandford, the minute I sot eyes on you. You was a po' skimpy little boy no mo' than about fo'teen when you lef' home to come No'th; but I knowed you the minute I sot eyes on you. You is the mawtal image of old marster. The other gen'leman resembles you mightily, suh; but you can't fool old Jake on a member of the old Vi'ginia family. No, suh."

At exactly the same time both Carterets smiled and extended a hand for the watch.

Uncle Jake's wrinkled, black face lost the expression of amusement into which he had vainly twisted it. He knew that he was being teased, and that it made little real difference, as far as its safety went, into which of those outstretched hands he placed the family treasure. But it seemed to him that not only his own pride and loyalty but much of the Virginia Carterets' was at stake. He had heard down South during the war about that other branch of the family that lived in the North and fought on "the yuther side," and it had always grieved him. He had followed his "old marster's" fortunes from stately luxury through war to almost poverty. And now, with the last relic and reminder of him, blessed by "old missis," and intrusted implicitly to his care, he had come ten thousand miles, as it seemed, to deliver it into the hands of the one who was to wear it and wind it and cherish it and listen to it tick off the unsullied hours that marked the lives of the Carterets—of Virginia.

His experience and conception of the Yankees had been an impression of tyrants—"low-down, common trash"—in blue, laying waste with fire and sword. He had seen the smoke of many burning homesteads almost as grand as Carteret Hall ascending to the drowsy Southern skies. And now he was face to face with one of them—and he could not distinguish him from his "young marster" whom he had come to find and bestow upon him the emblem of his kingship—even as the arm "clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful" laid Excalibur in the right hand of Arthur. He saw before him two young men, easy, kind, courteous, welcoming, either of whom might have been the one he sought. Troubled, bewildered, sorely grieved at his weakness of judgment, old Jake abandoned his loyal subterfuges. His right hand sweated against the buckskin cover of the watch. He was deeply humiliated and chastened. Seriously, now, his prominent yellow-white eyes closely scanned the two young men. At the end of his scrutiny he was conscious of but one difference between them. One wore a narrow, black tie with a white pearl stickpin. The other's "four-in-hand" was a narrow, blue one pinned with a black pearl.

And then to old Jake's relief there came a sudden distraction. Drama knocked at the door with imperious knuckles, and forced Comedy to the wings, and Drama peeped with a smiling but set face over the footlights.

Percival, the hater of mill supplies, brought in a card, which he handed, with the manner of one bearing a cartel, to Blue Tie.

"'Olivia De Ormond,'" read Blue Tie from the card. He looked inquiringly at his cousin.

"Why not have her in," said Black Tie, "and bring matters to a conclusion?"

"Uncle Jake," said one of the young men, "would you mind taking that chair over there in the corner for a while? A lady is coming in—on some business. We'll take up your case afterwards."

The lady whom Percival ushered in was young and petulantly, decidedly, freshly, consciously, and intentionally pretty. She was dressed with such expensive plainness that she made you consider lace and ruffles as mere tatters and rags. But one great ostrich plume that she wore would have marked her anywhere in the army of beauty as a wearer of the merry helmet of Navarre.

Miss De Ormond accepted the swivel chair at Blue Tie's desk. Then the gentlemen drew leather upholstered seats conveniently near, and spoke of the weather.

"Yes," said she, "I noticed it was warmer. But I mustn't take up too much of your time during business hours. That is," she continued, "unless we talk business."

She addressed her words to Blue Tie, with a charming smile.

"Very well," said he. "You don't mind my cousin being present, do you? We are generally rather confidential with each other—especially in business matters."

"Oh, no," caroled Miss De Ormond. "I'd rather he did hear. He knows all about it, anyhow. In fact, he's quite a material witness because he was present when you—when it happened. I thought you might want to talk things over before—well, before any action is taken, as I believe the lawyers say."

"Have you anything in the way of a proposition to make?" asked Black Tie.

Miss De Ormond looked reflectively at the neat toe of one of her dull kid pumps.

"I had a proposal made to me," she said. "If the proposal sticks it cuts out the proposition. Let's have that settled first."

"Well, as far as——" began Blue Tie.

"Excuse me, cousin," interrupted Black Tie, "if you don't mind my cutting in." And then he turned, with a good-natured air, toward the lady.

"Now, let's recapitulate a bit," he said cheerfully. "All three of us, besides other mutual acquaintances, have been out on a good many larks together."

"I'm afraid I'll have to call the birds by another name," said Miss De Ormond.

"All right," responded Black Tie, with unimpaired cheerfulness; "suppose we say 'squabs' when we talk about the 'proposal' and 'larks' when we discuss the 'proposition.' You have a quick mind, Miss De Ormond. Two months ago some half a dozen of us went in a motor car for a day's run into the country. We stopped at a road house for dinner. My cousin proposed marriage to you then and there. He was influenced to do so, of course, by the beauty and charm which no one can deny that you possess."

"I wish I had you for a press agent, Mr. Carteret," said the beauty, with a dazzling smile.

"You are on the stage, Miss De Ormond," went on Black Tie. "You have had, doubtless, many admirers and perhaps other proposals. You must remember, too, that we were a party of merry-makers on that occasion. There were a good many corks pulled. That the proposal of marriage was made to you by my cousin we cannot deny. But hasn't it been your experience that, by common consent, such things lose their seriousness when viewed in the next day's sunlight? Isn't there something of a code among good sports—I use the word in its best sense—that wipes out each day the follies of the evening previous?"

"Oh, yes," said Miss De Ormond. "I know that very well. And I've always

played up to it. But as you seem to be conducting the case—with the silent consent of the defendant—I'll tell you something more. I've got letters from him repeating the proposal. And they're signed, too."

"I understand," said Black Tie gravely. "What's your price for the letters?"

"I'm not a cheap one," said Miss De Ormond. "But I had decided to make you a rate. You both belong to a swell family. Well, if I *am* on the stage nobody can say a word against me truthfully. And the money is only a secondary consideration. It isn't the money I was after. I—I believed him—and—and I liked him."

She cast a soft, entrancing glance at Blue Tie from under her long eyelashes.

"And the price?" went on Black Tie inexorably.

"Ten thousand dollars," said the lady sweetly.

"Or——"

"Or the fulfillment of the engagement to marry."

"I think it is time," interrupted Blue Tie, "for me to be allowed to say a word or two. You and I, cousin, belong to a family that has held its head pretty high. You have been brought up in a section of the country very different from the one where our branch of the family lived. Yet both of us are Carterets, even if some of our ways and theories differ. You remember it is a tradition of the family that no Carteret ever failed in chivalry to a lady or failed to keep his word when it was given."

Then Blue Tie, with frank decision showing on his countenance, turned to Miss De Ormond.

"Olivia," said he, "on what date will you marry me?"

Before she could answer, Black Tie again interposed.

"It is a long journey," said he, "from Plymouth Rock to Norfolk Bay. Between the two points we find the changes that nearly three centuries have brought. In that time the old order has changed. We no longer burn witches or torture slaves. And to-day we neither spread our cloaks on the mud for ladies to walk over nor treat them to the ducking stool. It is the age of common sense, adjustment, and proportion. All of us—ladies, gentlemen, women, men, Northerners, Southerners, lords, caitiffs, actors, hardware drummers, senators, hod carriers, and politicians—are coming to a better understanding. Chivalry is one of our words that changes its meaning every day. Family pride is a thing of many constructions—it may show itself by maintaining a moth-eaten arrogance in a cob-webbed Colonial mansion or by the prompt paying of one's debts.

"Now, I suppose you've had enough of my monologue. I've learned something of business and a little of life; and I somehow believe, cousin, that our great-great-grandfathers, the original Carterets, would indorse my view of this matter."

Black Tie wheeled around to his desk, wrote in a check book and tore out the check, the sharp rasp of the perforated leaf making the only sound in the room. He laid the check within easy reach of Miss De Ormond's hand.

"Business is business," said he. "We live in a business age. There is my personal check for ten thousand dollars. What do you say, Miss De Ormond—will it be orange blossoms or cash?"

Miss De Ormond picked up the check carelessly, folded it indifferently, and stuffed it into her glove.

"Oh, this'll do," she said calmly. "I just thought I'd call and put it up to you. I guess you people are all right. But a girl has feelings, you know. I've heard one of you was a Southerner—I wonder which one of you it is."

She arose, smiled sweetly, and walked to the door. There with a flash of white teeth and a dip of the heavy plume as she disappeared.

Both of the cousins had forgotten Uncle Jake for the time. But now they heard the shuffling of his shoes as he came across the rug toward them from his seat in the corner.

"Young marster," he said, "take yo' watch."

And without hesitation he laid the ancient timepiece in the hand of its rightful owner.

Little Songs for Lois

Gypsy Tribute

YOUR gypsy soul came seeking golden things:
Red beads, and scarfs like blue-silk strips of sky,
And smooth eardrops as green as parrot wings.
The glint of daggers in your wild brown eye
Made many lovers and their red gold part.
I had no wealth to flaunt my worship by—
Only the golden bauble of my heart.

Poplar Tree

TO see a stately, wind-swayed poplar tree,
That turns its leaves to silver in the wind,
Recalls your fresh young gracefulness to me
And sends your beauty sweeping through my mind.

The thought of you, as impudent and gay
As you so irrepressibly have been,
Has made me wish that all of life were May
And earth a grassy field to wander in.—*Laurence Lee.*

by

Maurice Hewlett

Author of "The Forest Lovers"

Mrs. Lancelot

In Two Parts . . . Part II

CHAPTER XVI.

NAUSITHOE AND OTHER POEMS.

THE ways of poets are past finding out, and arguing with them is idle; otherwise one would have been interested to know how Gervase Poore found time to follow the practice of the law to the advantage of his master's clients, to inform himself so perfectly into the habits of Mrs. Lancelot and her two cavaliers, and to compose the numbers which make up "Nausithoë and Other Poems." Not only did he do so, but he found them a publisher by the friendly services of Mr. Thomas Moore, and received a reasonable attention from the reviews, and, in all, the sum of twenty pounds.

His talents were admitted, his *perfervidum ingenium;* but he was reproached for an undue warmth of expression, for a lusciousness of epithet. A critic said that he treated women as if they were fruit; another that his collected heroines were like odalisques within book covers. Even his friend Mr. Moore reproved him. "You're too warm, my boy. They'll take it from me, but they won't take it from you."

"Because you make them cry, the women are on your side," Poore grumbled.

"I'll not deny it," said Tom. "You'll never get 'em by scolding. Besides—a plague! Aren't they darlings?"

"I have no notion," Gervase answered. "I only know one—and she's a darling, if you will."

"And do you want to scold her, young man? You make her cry that way, but she'll owe you no thanks for that."

"She shall never cry when I've got her," said Poore. "She won't have time."

Mr. Moore looked at him quizzingly, and wagged his plump forefinger.

"I believe you're something of a Turk, young Poore. I shall set Bessy at you—for your soul's health. Now, when will you come down to Wilts and see my Bessy? Proud she'll be—and we'll have a great night. Maybe I'll

get his Lordship in to supper. You'll enjoy him."

"I shall quarrel with him. No lords for me, Tom. I'm not an easy drinker. I get too hot."

Tom ran through the thin green quarto, supping sweets as he went. "Nausithoë" was a little long for him; and he owned he had no taste for phantoms. "To set the dear girl cuddling with a mist wraith! It's too bad of ye, Poore. But ye've no conscience then at all. 'The little slim thing, gossamer light'—a pretty line, a tripping, pretty rhythm. It's better than my anapaests, and be d—d to you. I could never hit off octo-syllables. Here we are again:

> She, bosom's mate, the delicate,
> Child-faced, gray-eyed, of sober gait,
> Of burning mind, of passion pent
> To image making, ever went
> Where wonned her mistress; for those two
> By the heart's grace together grew.

Young man, your authority for giving the Lady Proserpine a bedfellow?"

"Callimachus, Tom," said Poore before he drank.

"I overlooked the bard. I can't contradict ye—being a poor Grecian. But she's a darling, this Nausithoë.

> O thou meek
> And gentle vision, let me tell
> Thy beauties o'er I've loved so well. . . .

And bedad, so you do, you rogue." Then he ran on:

> Thy sweet low bosom's rise and fall,
> Pulsing the heart's clear madrigal,
> Or how the blue beam from thine eyes
> Imageth all love's urgencies;
> Thy lip's frail fragrance. . . .

Tu-tu-tu! This is a very pictorial piece, and I'll warrant her true to sample. Now who'd she be? Do I know her? Is there any more of her, after old Endocles has hugged her into a rheumatiz—ugh! You've no heart, me boy. You're no lover."

"I love her beyond music, Tom. She's everywhere in that book—and I'm going to send it to her—and tell her so, too."

Tom was turning over the pages.

"She'll take it kindly, if she's as you make her out. Is she here, too? What's this? What's this?

> The thin Coän vest
> Folding that tremulous bosom, learn to sing
> Treasure more ample, treasury more deft. . . .

Fie, Gervase Poore! They call me Anacreon, but they'll call you Propertius. Have you seen her, then, in a Coän vest? You've had your *bonnes fortunes.*"

This Poore accepted with a grin. His friend ran sparkling on to the end. Then he declaimed:

> "With what black juices rung from Thessaly
> He stained thee, lute, with what of myrrh and nard
> She steeped thee; whatso thou hast learned of rite
> Mutter'd by witches' fire—come, where no fard
> Can thicken thy delight,
> Nor unguents make more bright mystery,
> Nor unguents make more bright
> Her face, her eyes, her body, in my sight!

Boy, you've venom. You can bite. What had she done to you?"

Poore was scowling.

"Never you mind, Tom. I was in a rage, I admit. Sir, I howled, I tore my hair. But I felt better for it—and I should have cut it out but that it's so d—d good. And she won't understand it, bless her pure heart!"

Tom shook his head. "She will do that. She'll understand it. She'll have it by heart."

"That," said Poore, "is how she's got to have me—by hook or by crook."

"Leda's a good subject——" The elder was back in the volume. "I thought of it myself—but I shirked it. Married man, my boy; and I read Bessy every line. Make that rule when

you set up house with Nausithoë, or Cynthia—no, no, she's not a Cynthia, I'll swear; for you're an honest boy for all your mountings—but I like your Leda, saving one bit that's too free. Upon my Pegasus, too free. I should never have dared. You end well—you can do that. You prove yourself so. Any one can begin—but to end, ah! Now how long were you getting that?

"The swan that dies in music, other ware—
O lucent stream that mirrors swan for swan!—
For mating hath and mastery. Leda knew it—
The swan's wife!—for in time an egg she bare
Down by the sedges where her love began,
Twi-yolkt of perfect woman, perfect man—
Helen so rare imperfect man must rue it;
And as the sweet spring ran
She nested them, and he watched by her there."

"I got it in Piccadilly—whole—laid it like an egg."

"A polished egg—eh? Keats couldn't have done that, the sweet fellow. He liked proverbial endings—ran sententious as he drooped. What is it? 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' tum-ti-tum. Yes, that's a way. But I like yours. Here's another:

"Oreithyia, by the North Wind carried
To stormy Thrace, think you of how you tarried
And let him woo and wed? Ah, no, for now
He's kissed all Athens from my open brow.
I am the Wind's wife, wooed and won and married.

"And you can put things with fine simplicity, my boy. Above, ye say—

"She bore him twins,
Zethes and Calaïs, in a rock-bound place.

I like that; I know that's good. The most of us are too fond of confectionery. But you put your lady in queer conjunctions, truly. Here she is married to the North-east Wind. Worse than her ghost! What'll they leave for you, my lad? And what'll you be to her?"

"I'll be everything to her, or nothing," said Poore, who seemed serenely positive about it.

Next his friend must know the lady, and after some pressing, finding out that she was of the great world, he was like a hound on a good scent and swept all the coverts in London till he found her. So he presently did with a whoop, and a "Tear him to pieces!"

Poore was now red and angry. "I'll trouble you to speak with all respect of Mrs. Lancelot, Mr. Moore." The little Irishman laughed till he cried.

"Pooh for you, Mr. Poore. Your name may rhyme with mine, but yourself won't reason with me on those terms. Respect! And how should I not respect a charming lady, friend of so great a man as the Duke?"

"It's not for that I should ask you to respect her—but for this, Tom, for this." He banged with his fist. "That, being his friend, inmate of his house with her dolly-stick husband, she remains beyond reproach, ineffably pure and holy."

"In a Coän vest, I think?" said Tom Moore quietly.

"She could wear less than that, and remain as she is. When Aphrodite came shining from the foam, do you think she gave shameful thoughts? Only to the shamed already."

Tom, who was arguing in the air, and only a strict moralist on paper, and then only occasionally, was now centered upon a much more interesting point. He loved to intervene. Could he serve his young friend?

"Listen here, my boy. I love you and will do you a turn if I can. Now what do you say? I am on visiting terms—I could make my bow to her any day of the week—or to the Duke, begad. His two fingers—and he gives no more to the grandest in the land—are mine when I want 'em. Now what do you say? Shall I ask leave to present you? Shall I do that?"

The young man frowned over the proposal and chewed his cheek. Then he tossed back his cloud of hair. "I'll not go to her like that—I'll do it my own way. Thank ye kindly, Tom, but I'm minded to take her by storm."

"How'll ye do that, my boy? You're not Jove that I know of. Don't be absurd now, but buy yourself a pair of white kids and I'll take ye to the ball."

"Oh, I'll go to the ball with you, Tom, and shift for myself. I'll not refuse a card for the ball. And I'll tell you what you shall do for me—you're a kind little man, Tom, and the best friend I've got, I do believe. You shall take her 'Nausithoë' and she shall read it. What do you say?"

"I say," cried Tom, "that you've the damnedest impudence of anybody out of Ireland, and I've a good mind to throw this pint pot at ye. But I'll do it, I'll do it. I'm an impudent rascal myself—and that's how I get even with the aristocracy. For I know I'm as good as any of 'em in my heart of hearts—d'ye see—by reason of me genius."

"And so you are, Tom," said Poore, folding his arms. "You and I will never bow the knee but to two things—Brain and Beauty."

"And brawn," Tom shouted, "and brawn, me little gamester! Brain, Brawn and Beauty!" At that moment he felt himself to be ten feet high and a very conqueror.

The tavern filled, and Mr. Moore, who was about to make his bow to a great lady and feared to foul his fine feathers with tobacco smoke, was in haste to depart. Poore accompanied him into the street. It was raining and the young man had no great coat. "Let me take ye in me cabriolet," said Tom. "It'll not be much out of me way. I'm going to Holland House—but I'm your man as far as Tibbald's Road."

"I'm not going there, Tom—not for a long spell."

"Where are ye for then, bad boy?"

Poore said seriously, "I think that she dines at Lady B——'s in Arlington Street. I've lost her entry, thanks to you."

"Me dear boy—me dear boy!"

"Not a bit, Tom. You've done me a sight of good. But you shall put me down in Piccadilly and I shall see her *sortie*. She'll be going to some great house or another afterward, poor dear. She's looking very worn. She grows thin, you know." He spoke in a hushed-down voice. "Tom, I saw her collar-bones the other night, and they cut me to the quick."

"The devil they did," said Tom.

"She's not fed, my man, she's not fed. It's monstrous—she's being starved. I must stop it, you know." He groaned, threw up his head, then his arms, invoking the sky. "The rain comes down like tears. Nature pities us—the generous goddess. O God, Tom, O God—cry with me, O God—I'm bleeding for her."

"Me dear boy, me dear boy——" Tom Moore had tears in his eyes. "And ye might as well be crying for the hidden moon. Here's the shay. In with you."

Jogging over the cobbles the kind little Irishman kept his hand on the knee of his perverse friend and poured out his advice like water.

"Now do be guided by me, Gervase; the road you take leads right to Bedlam. You've a gift, you've a fire, you've a sincerity—you mean what you say, and you don't care a curse for the reviewers. You may be a great man, Gervase. Think of that now. And you throw it all to the winds for the sake of a little slip of a woman not so high as your shoulder. And she with two husbands already! O madness, madness! *Quem deus vult perdere*, bedad! What can be the end of it?—let me ask you; kindly think it over, and I'll be obliged to ye. D'ye know

Lancelot? 'T is not a man, 't is an icehouse. D'ye know me friend the Duke? 'T is not a man, 't is a raging volcano. It's between fire and snow she is, the little slim thing, as ye call her, prettily enough—oh, you've the words in ye—and the music of 'um. And where do you step in, unless ye can souse the Duke with melted Lancelot? Is it that you are after? God's my life, Gervase, it'll be murder you'll be making, bloody murder! Ah, now, let the woman alone. Make a wrench of ut, me boy. Come with me to Sloperton and see my Bessy, and play with the children. Make your pomes to their good little hearts. Why, why, it's madness! An attorney's clerk, and the Duke's flame! Poet be jiggered. They don't know 'um in the *Morning Post*. 'Mr. Poore, who is, we believe, an attorney, yesterday ran away with Mrs. L——t. Gretna is the supposed destination of the retiring couple.' That's how ye'll be pilloried, young man."

Gervase, his hat over his brows, had little to say; but God, it seems, had not given him his square jaw for nothing. At the White Horse Cellars he thrust his head out of the coach and stopped the driver. Then he jumped out, but not before he had wrung his friend's hand.

"God bless you, Tom. You are the best little man in breeches that ever I met. Take her her book and tell her that her lover wrote it with his blood. I'll see you again, please God, before you go to the west. Good night, my friend, good night." And he was gone. Tom slapped his knees, pulled up the window, and away. *Quem deus vult perdere,* indeed!

The grudged of the gods crossed Piccadilly and entered Arlington Street, where the carriages were already lined. They coiled down Bennet Street into Saint James', and the block on the pavement was dense about the awning. Link boys stood there restless, the footmen were lined up, and behind them a dingy crowd, wet, steaming and sour-smelling. Gervase insinuated his broad person by degrees into the midst, pulled his hat farther over his brows and waited. The guests were departing already. Great names were bawled out into the street, and at every one a footman detached himself from his company, and a link boy, eager for a copper, flew shrieking the name. A Royal Highness, muzzy with drink, came first with a cloud of witnesses about him: men talking loudly, half-contemptuous of their convoy, half-elated at the rank of him. Dowagers with daughters, uniformed officers, two Russian grandees in sables and great headdresses, two pretty women in diamonds and feathers escorted by a purple-faced peer, some young men in long cloaks who pushed a way through the spectators. One of them butted into Gervase with a "Give way, my man;" but Gervase gave him the benefit of his shoulder without a word, and jerked the dandy's hat off. "D—— your eyes, you booby! Don't you know a gentleman?" "D—— your own, I do," was the reply, which the bystanders approved with jeers. The injured exquisite stood with his friends, meditating attack, but Gervase had turned his back, for "The Duke of Devizes' carriage!" was being shouted from the house; and "The Duke's coming—look out for the Duke!" was bandied among the people.

Gervase, working his jaw, waited without a breath. His eyes were fixed upon the lighted interior. She was coming. He saw the eyes of the footmen turned toward the stairs. Then he saw her plain.

She came out on the arm of the Duke, whose white head was bare. He looked straight before him, carrying his head stiffly, and talked in his high complaining way. "I told the fellow that I could do nothing for him. Not in my county

—hadn't served with me or anybody I cared a snap of the fingers——" She was looking pale and preoccupied, was not listening: that he saw at once. White plumes danced above her small head, and a glittering band of gold brocade held them, wound closely about her hair. She was cloaked, but he could see her neck—a line of pearls round her throat, and then whiteness, and the gleam of her skin. Ah, but she was thin, this guarded goddess of his! Her eyes were anxious—how large, how deeply blue! She turned her head his way. Vague wonder showed, vague suffering. It seemed to him that he and she gazed long at each other. His own strong color fainted, the mist came over his eyes, his lips moved; and the blood pumped up from his heart beat at the walls of his veins. She passed by; he could see her no longer. He ground his teeth together then and stiffened himself, clenching his fists. By God, by God, but he could take her now. And then, at the words, behind her and her escort, he saw Charles Lancelot come, tall and cold, with trouble on his brow. The husband and the lover, besetting her behind and before. What had they been doing with her in there? Where were they taking her now, these two? To what infamy? What would they do with her when they had her behind those great doors of Wake House, that opened in the midst like the two jaws of Behemoth, and shut upon her and hid her from him? Infamy, infamy! What a life for this lovely, hapless woman—with an ice-gripped husband and a strident, monstrous old lover, who lived shamelessly and laughed at himself for it! Did God live, and love His world, and this fairest of His creatures, and suffer such things to be? Was he, Poore the poet, to be execrated if he snatched her from this, and they, forsooth, to be honored for shackling her by the ankle and hoarding her for their vile or sinister purpose? If he kissed the light back into those glorious eyes, if he warmed those paling lips, if he renewed that fading form, if he gave her the power of loving—would that be a sin? Monstrous to suppose it, blasphemy against God, when they froze and stared her cold.

He heard cheers for "the Duke" as the great horses sprang forward. He saw the footmen swaying behind—janissaries, eunuchs of the door. He raised his fist, and from between clenched teeth cried curses upon these pashas who sat upon the prone bodies of Englishmen and fed on delicate flesh.

CHAPTER XVII.

SHE READS OF HERSELF.

Charles was upon her conscience, and her conscience fretted at her nerves. It's no wonder she was getting thin. She was twenty-six years old, had been six years married, and four years a wife. Her only child had been born dead, and by her own act she was to have no other. And Charles, while he resented it deeply, made no overt advances to her. She discovered that she knew nothing about Charles. It was that which made her pity him. He had become a stranger, would have to woo her again, but must do so, she knew, fruitlessly, and would not, as a matter of fact, do so at all. If Charles missed his spring, he could not spring again. She felt that in various signs. He was now become outrageously polite: that was a sure sign in Charles. He had always been polite, but was now outrageously so. The business of this tore her to pieces and threatened her control of herself. When he sprang up—from whatever he was doing—to open the door for her, she could have stormed at him—a white storm it would have been, for he made her go quite cold. Yet she dared not hint at her distress, for it would have made him worse. He

was so inarticulate, this unhappy man. To rob him of his form and ceremony would be to make him dumb.

He had always been silent, discussing few intimacies with her. His manner of dealing with such things had been by discoursing round about them. He had made homilies, and she had listened, ticking off the heads, that she might get them by heart. Now he avoided all such matters: their consequence, or their futility, it seemed, intimidated him.

But, while he was thus abstinent from reality, he became profuse in small talk. He gave her details of public life—veriest gossip—which sickened her of politics, and, if he could only have known it, threw her more often, for mere breathing room, into the Duke's society. For the Duke looked on politics as a game to keep the groundlings busy while he, and perhaps a couple more, kept the King's government in running order. The Duke's mind may not have been of a high caliber—certainly he was no idealist; but it had a large outlook. Charles saw pin points, loved minutiæ. Georgiana, who, like all women, was attentive to detail, like all women despised it in a man.

She had hitherto accepted the tory formulæ, as Charles displayed them, without a question. Under the Duke's influence she now began to dismiss them as of little account. Property, upon which the opposition to reform really depended, was sacred in the eyes of the Charleses; if you could take a man's borough or vote, you might take his land, or his wife. Robbery, sacrilege, the door open to Anarchy! So cried Charles. The Duke, however, admitted that you could take anything from anybody—if you could get it. His immediate business was to see that you could *not* get it. Meantime, there was the State, the body politic; which was a complicated machine running in conjunction with other European machines, or in opposition to them. Now, said he, this old machine has been got into a groove which suits it, which suits the mechanics, and does not hinder the great complexus of which it is a part. Europe understands us, and we Europe. We can get along with few rubs. But if you change the House of Commons you will have to make new grooves—which will take time; and not only that, but while you are making them your machine will be running eccentrically, running amok, jostling among other, stable bodies, colliding—in so many words, as he put it, this country will be at the mercy of any other which happens to have its affairs in order. That wouldn't at all suit the man who wishes to dine, in decent comfort, at eight o'clock every night. Therefore it must be stopped.

Here at least was a practical view of politics, and Georgiana, who had not the least suspicion that she was an idealist, jumped at it and spread it out like butter upon the hard biscuit of Charles' catering. It was capable of infinite extension, of course. She neither knew that, nor that it was the merest opportunism. She did not see that the Duke was the greatest Anarch in England, keeping the rest of us from Anarchy that he might so remain in peace and quietness. The advantage of his political philosophy to her was that, when the time came, she was able to shed it, like a shawl, by a jerk of the shoulders.

The Duke, plain man that he was, desired her, and showed it. But he had himself very well in hand, and was quite content to wait her convenience. She wouldn't—couldn't—stand much more of Charles, he judged. Meantime Charles was useful—and she had something for him; not much, but something. He was able to be her constant companion, her benefactor, her husband's

patron, to talk to her extremely intimately of his affairs, to show her nevertheless by every look that he coveted possession of her and her charms—and with all that, to claim nothing she did not choose to give him. He got all the pleasure out of all this that was to be had; and it was a good deal.

She gave him her hand, she gave him her cheek. She saw no harm in that. But she was able, by some unconscious hold upon him which was quite out of her recognition, to keep him there. After that one occasion when he had failed of an assault, he refrained from attempting her by any such means. But he talked—his frankness ought, perhaps, to have appalled her; but it did not. It interested her; she never replied to it in its own kind; but she listened. So far in her life, she had been a listener. She had listened to her family, to Charles, now to the Duke. None of them had ever stirred her into action.

But she was not a statue; she was become a woman; and the soul cannot thrive on listening; and if the soul grows thin, so does the body. She was now in her twenty-sixth year, a grave and guarded little person, serious and pale, with eyes so large and thoughtful that you might have supposed all the cares of the state to be upon her mind and conscience and that the Duke was enabled to carry them so lightly because she had allowed him to put them there. She said of herself, ruefully, that she was growing a dowdy; but Gervase Poore, who had quick eyes, thought that he knew better. To him she was the perfection of delicate and hesitating charm The tremulous wonder of a spring morning was a favorite image with him; the first flutter of the light, the pensive gray and violet of quiet evenings.

One of his similes for her was the Hidden Rose, the frail, coy flower of the June hedgerow:

> More than those
> Enfranchised beauties her perfection shows
> Like a concealèd rose,
> But to the thickets where she lieth close.

This will do for a poet; but she was shocked at herself sometimes.

The fact was that she was starved. She was a woman of warm imagination, of generous impulse. She would live, as all good women live, by giving. She would give the breast; but she had no milk. For that she must be fed. Her body was starved by her starving soul. Gervase had often raged and torn at his hair as he sat in his dark lodging picturing her life. He was wonderfully accurate. He saw her with her husband at hand, busy with her own vague thoughts while he prated of this and that nothingness. He saw her with her cynical old lover, listening while he revealed to her his mind—and busy again with her pondered judgments. He saw her in her crowded and brilliant world, quietly beautiful among the flaunting, shrill women, dressed exquisitely, a thing of wonderful art—anything but herself. Deep in his heart he had her as she really was, a fairy child, an elfin thing, at one with the loveliest of Nature's world, which is so little our world that the squirrel knows it more, and serves it better than the wisest of us. Gradually as he agonized, his strength of purpose grew—to take her out of all this, and set her free. "Cage bird, cage bird, I will open the door!" he sang. But to do that needed craft and a *savoir faire* which he was far from possessing. He bought himself a dress coat against the Wake House ball, for which his good friend Tom had promised him a card. Toward this adventure he set his eyes, on it he brooded day and night. It grew portentous, waxing as he waned. As the time drew near his heart was likely to fail him, so charged with fate did it now loom.

And the card came

The Duke of Devizes requests the honor of Mr. Poore's company at Wake House, Piccadilly, on —— K —— at nine o'clock.

It had come; and the name of Mr. Poore was filled in by Mrs. Lancelot. Her pen had traced the words. He kept it for the rest of his life.

Mr. Moore, whose social instinct was so remarkable, had long before this paid his court to the new star. He had called upon her in Smith Square. He called again when she was installed in Wake House; and now, the ball in prospect, actually foretold in the *Morning Post*, he called once more. In his hand as he made his bow was a thin quarto volume. He found the Duke with her.

"Fair lady, I'm a fortunate man! Duke, your humble servant."

"How do, Moore?" said the Duke, with one finger for the visitor. He did not like the little poet, but had he been his bosom friend he would have had no other greeting. The fact is, the Duke liked nobody. He had no natural benevolence. He could love, we know; but that's a different thing. In his ordinary acquaintance he liked or disliked the things which people did. Above all he disliked a fuss; and Mr. Moore could not walk across a room without that. He felt himself in action, and could only be certain that he had made an effect when he had set everybody else making one.

The poet, however, made much of his finger.

"Radiant, my lord! I am newly from the country, Lord Lansdowne having given me a seat in his carriage, and Holland House open to me for as long as I please. That great lady would have it so, and it wasn't for me to deny her!" He turned to his hostess. "But yourself, fair lady? I need not ask if you are well. You are always well, as becomes one favored by the Graces. Now, lest you should accuse me that I come to your shrine empty handed, let me unburden myself. Mrs. Lancelot, you have made a poet immortal!" He tapped the thin volume. "You are here, let me tell you, in a multitude of disguises."

She flushed with pleasure, opened her eyes wide; she laughed a little. The Duke watched her eyes narrow, and glimmer like stars.

"Really! Am I in that book? Poetry! Oh, do let me see. Nobody has ever written poems about me."

The Duke snorted. "Poems, my dear! Little you know! I've written dozens!"

She turned to him mischievous.

"Your poems! In blue books! I don't like the binding."

"Match your blue stockings," said the Duke; but Tom protested.

"Fie, fie, your Grace. Mrs. Lancelot has no such pretensions. She wears her colors in her eyes. But let me show you the volume."

"Give it me, please." She took it eagerly, opened, bent her head and began to read in the middle.

"Your own, Moore?" the Duke asked.

"Never in the world!" cried Tom. "To begin with, it's too high doctrine for me, seeing I'm turned forty, with wife and bairns at home. This is a positive young rhymester flying at great game. And when he don't hymn our fair friend, 'tis all nymphs and goddesses—'all growing naked in the open air!' Ay! And a pretty turn he has at a couplet, the rogue! But a sad heretic, you know. He snaps his fingers at prosody. Base is the slave that scans, says he! And I say: That is mighty fine, me boy, but if they can't read ye they won't buy ye; and me friend John Murray will visit you with his displeasure."

Georgiana looked up, composedly. Whatever she may have read, she showed nothing.

"Whose is this book? Is it really intended for me?"

"Undoubtedly, ma'am. The young rascal's inscribed it."

She hastened to look at the fly-leaf, read her name and the author's. "It is very odd. Who is Gervase Poore? I have never heard of him, and certainly never met him."

Tom looked waggish. "It seems that you have. Do you like his rhymes? Have you hit upon 'Nausithoë?' "

She looked doubtful. "I think I shall like some of it—I don't know. I shall read it. But you say that I have met him. When was that? Long ago?"

"Some years ago," she was told. "Carry your memory back. Were you ever at Vauxhall Gardens—at a fête?"

She thought, then started, and looked quickly. "Yes, yes, I was. I met you there." She turned to the Duke. "You must remember it. We were with Di and Carnaby, and I was lost—and you all found me. That was—let me think—three years ago! At least!" Then she turned her eager face to the poet, eager yet serious. "Is Gervase Poore the young man—the gentleman who was so kind as to help me?" Tom nodded and smiled at her. She explained quickly to the Duke, who took it all as a matter of course.

"I lost them, you know, and stood by the entrance to the boxes, to wait until they came. Two horrible, rude persons came up, and began to talk to me. I was very uncomfortable, and didn't know what to do—and then this Mr. Poore flashed in between us like a hurricane, and knocked one of the men down. I hardly saw him, before he was gone again. I just thanked him. But I remember him perfectly. He looked very wild."

"He *is* very wild, ma'am," said Tom, nodding again.

"Seems able to use his hands though," the Duke proposed.

Georgiana illuminated him. "He was very tall and square-shouldered. High-colored, had blue eyes. Bright blue they were. His hair was very fair. How extraordinary! How very extraordinary! But I think it's very kind of him. I shall write him a little letter. Don't you think I ought to?"

That was to the Duke, who simply said:

"Yes, I think you ought. You'll make him the happiest poet in Grub Street."

" 'T will be a saintly act," said Tom; "but I'll go farther. I'll ask you to let him wait upon you. He is a charming youth, and me very good friend."

She made an effort to conceal her interest in the poet who had belauded her in print. She was very simple: she liked to be liked.

"Pray let him come. I shall be glad to see him. I can thank him for his book and——"

"And his fisticuffs," the Duke added. "They were probably the more timely gift."

"Despite not the poet's mind," Tom said. "This is a good poet, though I don't say that he's always very reliable. 'T is a full jug, your Grace sees, and apt to spill over."

"Froth a bit, too, eh?" the Duke inquired. "I'll tell you what, Georgie," he added suddenly. "You shall have him to the ball." Then he turned to Moore and asked: "Has he got a coat, think you?"

"My lord," replied Tom, "he has a first-class coat, as I happen to know, for I saw it on him, and know where it came from. 'Tis a handsome coat on a handsome person. He'll do you no discredit."

"It's to be hoped that he'll do his tailor none. But that's not our affair. Will you have him, Georgie?"

She beamed her thanks. "I should like him to come of all things. That is so nice of you. I'll put a card in with my note." She went to her desk and wrote.

While she was thus engaged Charles came in, saw the visitor, and advanced with formal courtesy. "Evening, Charles," from his Grace. "Ha, Lancelot, me friend," from the poet, who presumed somewhat in such an address, and showed perhaps a shade of patronage to the husband of Egeria. The husband, at least, was sensitive to it, and grew very cold.

But the poet dashed in with the volume, the author, the past *rencontre* at Vauxhall, and the future preparing "through the courtesy of me noble friend." Charles was respectful to such a gracious act, but a little dry. Georgiana, busy with her note, heard everything, and felt irritated. Her warmth cooled, her pleasure was dashed. She sealed the letter and rose to give it to the poet.

"Please give this to Mr. Poore when you see him. You won't of course make it a burden to your conscience. There is no hurry."

"Ah, ma'am," cried he, "but he'll tear it out of me the moment I'm clear of the doorstep."

"Why, is he on the doorstep?" the Duke asked. "Let's ask him up. Charles, did you see a broad-shouldered poet by the railing?"

"No, indeed," said Charles. "It was dark, and I was preoccupied."

"So's he, it appears," the Duke chuckled. "So's Georgie here. We are all getting preoccupied. The rogue's been writing odes to her eyebrows."

"Indeed?" Charles said, and looked at his wife, as if to see, Tom afterward told Gervase, whether her eyebrows were very fine. They were, in fact, the most beautiful pair of penciled arcs you ever saw. So at least Gervase said.

Tom took his leave of the lady and tiptoed to the door. His coach, he said, awaited him to take him to Kensington. Georgiana put "Nausithoë" into her desk and locked it in.

Charles made no allusion to it or its writer. He dined early and went down to the House. His wife went out to two parties, met the Duke at the second of them and came back in his company to her empty apartment. He left her there, as the custom had now become, with a pressed hand and a kissed cheek. He never did more than that, but the evident fact that he desired more was a daily excitement. Sometimes, it is true, he exclaimed, half humorously, upon her prudery. "Oh, you're a stiff little lady! 'Pon my soul, I never met such a stickler in my life. Not a foot inside the door after eleven o'clock!"

She smiled meekly, deprecating his mockery. "Dear friend, don't tease me. I'm very tired. And you know what I try to do."

"You don't love me a scrap, my dear. And you try to pretend that you do. That's your difficulty."

She shook her head, still smiling. "No, no, you are wrong. You know that I like to be with you. You are so wonderfully good to me. It is beautiful, how good you are to me. You are my best friend. You know I'm not ungrateful. Oh!"—and she was urgent here—"oh, do believe me!"

That brought him up short. His arm would be round her. "Yes, yes, I was teasing you, as you said. My pretty one, I'm an old ruffian. Good night. Off with you to bed."

That sort of thing did occur now and again; but not upon this occasion, when her noble lover contented himself with a kiss of her fingers.

She took "Nausithoë" to bed with her, unconscious that she had been, half an hour earlier, under the burning eye of her author. Much of it she found exceedingly romantic, some of it rather shocking. The title poem made her wonder. There was no doubting its high seriousness. Whoever this unfortunate lady may have been, loved by a ghost and finding in his ghostly em-

braces her strange, sad comfort, the poet was in deadly earnest. He approached his task in the traditional manner, by invocations:

> Queen of the shadows, aid thou me
> Telling of fond Nausithoë,
> Thy bosom's friend, who for thy sake
> Gave up the life we live awake
> And lived the dream life. . . .

And after Proserpine he turns to a greater goddess:

> Thee, too, O Lady of the South,
> Uranian Kypris, I invoke,
> Lady of starry space, and stroke
> Of splendid wing, in whose strong wake
> Stream they who, filled with thee, forsake
> The clinging clots of earth, and rise—
> Lover and loved—to thy pure skies,
> To thy blue realm. . . .

This made her heart beat. Do lovers stream in the wake of Venus Urania? Alas, she had never so streamed!

She read on. This of Nausithoë, "bosom's mate" of Proserpine.

> The delicate,
> Child-faced, gray-eyed, of sober gait,
> Of burning mind, of passion pent
> To image making. . . .

Who was this child-faced woman, whose passion driven into narrow confines drove her to secret imagings of love and lovers? She felt her cheeks tingle. Was it possible that this broad-shouldered wild rescuer, in one flash of his hot eyes, had read into the very deeps of her? Was she then Nausithoë, embraced by a ghost? If she was, then what could be made of

> O thou meek
> And gentle vision, let me tell
> Thy beauties o'er I love so well?

Charged with foreknowledge, reasoning *a priori*, she could now read her own charms in the poet's eyes. He seemed to adore what she was accustomed to deprecate. There was comfort for her in such flattery. If he loved her because she was grave and cold; if he loved her shy form, the pallor of her lips, her thin fingers—why, then they were loveworthy! She raised her eyes timidly to the glass and saw herself there anew—desired, desirable, not obscure, but, rather, too rarely beautiful to be discerned. If she smiled at such high praise—and she caught herself at it—there was no mockery of the poet in her smile.

All this preface made the story which followed upon it of absorbing interest.

> Ah, love, ah, maiden delicate,
> How shall be told thy bitter fate?
> Remembered joy, Nausithoë!

A strange and poignant tale, wherein she could not but read herself, as one who was

> as all sweet women are,
> Prudes till love calls them, and then fierce
> for getting or spending.

She read on and read all. The thought possessed her, filled her with unquiet, made her hot with thought, cold with fear, made her eager, made her shamefast; made her wonder, made her long—to know more of this poet who seemed to know all of her, and to be so sure.

In the rest she was conscious of anti-climax; though it must be owned that she hunted, it is certain that she couldn't find any possible reference to herself. Which of these ladies could she be? Was she Myrtilla who said the Lord's Prayer backward at dawn and conjured up a Faun who made love to her? Was she Aglaë, the wood-wife? Was she Cynthia? Cynthia shocked her, who "fed on groans," whose "love and hate alike were dreadful, long, insatiate." Had she that in her allure to torture a poet? Had she then tortured Mr. Poore? She wished that he had contented himself with Nausithoë. It was finally as Nausithoë that she went late to sleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WAKE HOUSE BALL.

To this brilliant affair, where all that was noble in London was assembled before him, Gervase Poore the unknown and the truculent chose to come late. He found it easy to explain to himself why he did so. But little Tom, his friend, the pink of good-nature, who came for him even unto Clerkenwell, and found him writing, in his shirt and breeches, could not see it.

"Odd's my life, Gervase, have ye forgotten the ball?" Tom, dapper in his black smalls, silk stockings and pumps, his ruffled shirt, brooch and oiled hair, looked like the fairy godfather of Cinderella's brother in the raftered and candle-lit garret. The writer looked up.

"I've got her, my lovely dear! I've got her here. Listen, you pomander box!" And he read—

"Seeing your love
Sets me apart as one to whom joy can come never,
Yet made glorious as one
Who stands filled with the light of the sun—
Since I behold the mercies I may not claim—
I will raise immortal your name.

"The devil you will!" muttered Tom, who heartily believed it.

"All that you are,
All that God hath recessed and treasured in you—
The hint of you in the spring,
Your glancing carriage, your voice's ring,
Your starry face and the fragile rose of your lips,
Your eyes' sapphirine blue;
All your pure soul,
Keen and wandering, true and eager as flame,
Your sober thought and your pride
To nurse the passion you hold and hide—
The spirit of all that is lovely and void of blame—
I will figure the whole."

He looked up, flushed, and frowning.

"Mighty fine, Gervase," said his friend, and meant it. "But you'll figure very poorly at Wake House at this rate. Whatever else you figure, you won't figure there."

"I'm coming, Tom, you may be sure. But I'm taking this with me, and so must finish, d'ye see?"

"What good will the stuff be to ye at Wake House, ye gossoon?" cried Tom.

"I'm going to read it to her," he was told.

For answer to this he received a long stare. Tom was entirely serious: he admired no more; he was alarmed, even shocked. But he had to admit the young man's force.

"By God," he said finally, "I believe ye'll do it."

And then he collected himself. "The Lord be your friend, Gervase Poore, for you'll be needing a bigger man than *me*. But seeing that such audaciousness is your intent, I have no scruples in leaving you to find your way into the castle. So I'll take myself on."

"Good-by, Tom, good-by," said Poore, jumping up to clasp his friend. "God bless you for the kindest heart in England. It was like you to come——"

"And it's like you to refuse, me poor boy," said Tom. "Advice is wasted on ye, I know, yet I have it in me heart to——"

"Tom, Tom, I know what you want to say. Now see here, my dear. I am going into this headlong—just as I did before. You remember Vauxhall? She cowered there, my beautiful! against the wall—shivering at the mere breath of those goat-footed devils. Tom, she cowers yet. Man—men—Circe's herd—are snarling about her, licking their lips. A morsel! A morsel! A morsel for a moment's lechery! O God! Do you say the age of Pan is over? Do you say Pan is dead? Why, man, every woman is a hunted nymph. Every man is a satyr. She must be plucked out of this—to flower

in the open, God bless her! To unfold in the sun! God made this world to be a garden—and what have we made of it? Half a camp and half a lupanar!" He wrung his friend's hand. Tom went sobered away.

When Gervase arrived it was past eleven o'clock. The tall footmen had relaxed their rigidity and lounged in the hall. Gervase strode through them. Divested of his cloak, he climbed the stair, which was broad and marble, and following the sound of music, unannounced entered the first of the rooms. It was very full. It blazed with light. Uniforms, stars, blue ribbons abounded. Plumed ladies, diamonds, a thick and scented air, a continuous chattering sound of voices, talking vivaciously of nothing, laughing shrilly and foolishly —all this he marked as he stood calm in the doorway, hunting down face after face. He knew no one. Charles Lancelot was, in fact, there, prim-faced, whiskered and tall; but Gervase knew nothing about him. He looked for Georgiana with a beating heart, but without conviction. It was only the idea that she might be there which made his heart beat. Had she been, he was sure that he would have been certified by his familiar.

Next, he sought the Duke, whose face and trim figure were common property. Last, Tom Moore—his generous friend. No, there was no man. Through the door at the farther end he saw pass and repass, drifting like showered leaves in a wind, the dancers. He would look for her there, and shouldered his way through to the grouped nobility with no more ceremony than if they had been Dick and Harry, Bill and Jack round the orchestra at Vauxhall. He was maladroit, unceremonious. Manners he had none, but shoulders he had, and great inches, and a fine head. He was flushed deeply, his bright blue eyes burned, his brows scowled. He was much observed, and "Who the devil's that?" came from more than one mouth. But he looked at nobody, asked no pardons, named no permissions, and reached his doorway.

The great ballroom, lit by some thousand wax candles, dazzled him for a moment. He was conscious only of white and scarlet drifting and swirling by; of the slipping of countless feet, of the swish-swish of silk. By and by he began to distinguish, and was then conscious of profound moral revolt. He was aware of white forms of women, bare breasted, who seemed aswoon as they were wafted about—their bosoms crushed against the men who held them, their heads averted, their eyes half-closed, their lips parted. Hither and thither, round and round they were swept by their captors—whose faces were fierce, high-colored, bright-eyed; who triumphed, who laughed and tossed their heads; who capered and leaped. To every prancing satyr his bound nymph; what Mænad revel could be wilder than this? And she, his goddess, was one of these! He felt that the blood in his heart, insurgent, flowed up and filled his eyes. The white field swam all red. He saw no more; but closed down his eyelids and prayed to the Unknown God—and a vision came over him of a quiet valley, wooded slopes to the margin of a slow-winding broad river; of swallows in a golden evening light, and afar off the tinkle of sheep bells. There on a green-sward he saw his lady stand, "the little slim thing" in a white gown. She looked down the valley, shading her eyes from the sun. The sun sank, the shadows lengthened.

> Night gathers, and the crow
> Takes wing to the murky wood.

Soon all was in one level, shadowless light. And there she stood, smiling with lips and eyes, and held out her hand for him to take. Together the,

turned and walked by the river. There was no need for speed.

The music brayed and pounded; the swooning, caught-up women drifted about. Fine young men stamped their feet as they capered, and Gervase stood at the door prophesying in his dreams.

He came to himself with a start. She was not here, could not be in this very hell. There were rooms beyond, he saw, and he would go. Moving, he suddenly brought up short in collision. "Mercy on us, 'tis Gervase!" His cheerful friend, breathless and triumphant, his arm still lightly upon the waist of his partner, beamed upon him.

"Ye nearly drove me to perdition, Gervase. Permit me to present you—— Me young friend Mr. Poore, the famous poet. The Lady Geraldine O'Meara."

A fair lady bowed sweetly, and Gervase, only half recovered, inclined his fine head.

It was Tom who did the talking, for the Lady Geraldine had nothing to say, and Poore did not even look at her. She, on the other hand, freely admired him. Meantime Tom chattered and glowed.

"A fine sight, Gervase! 'And bright the lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men!' 'Twas Byron said it. Me poor friend, me poor dead friend. What a hand at a pen he had—a mad thing entirely. He used it as a sword, and cut figures out of his heart with it. Lady Geraldine, did ye ever see Byron now? Me friend, Mr. Poore here, has the scowl of him." Lady Geraldine smiled kindly and shook her head. She had no conversation. But conversation was not required of any of Mr. Moore's acquaintance. "The Duchess of Richmond of that occasion," he ran on, "was a little woman with a very bright eye. Our noble host here told me that she carried it off superbly, *superbly;* his own word. 'Let the music go on,' she said; 'for God's sake, let us behave ourselves.' And she got 'em all out of the place, and kept the thing going until five o'clock in the morning. And they heard the cannon as they went home by daylight—and the troops were pouring out all the time. Wonderful, wonderful! Gervase, have you made your bow? Well, a word in your ear—you'll find your Cynthia in the little drawing-room, two rooms away. She don't dance, you must know. Lady Geraldine, shall we have another turn? You will? You are the soul of gallantry, and I'm not the man to deny myself." He waved his gloved hand, engaged the lady and bounced her away. Gervase pushed through the throng.

From the next doorway, where he stood with his back to the dancers, he saw her. She was two rooms away; but he saw her immediately, and held his breath. For a moment, for the first moment of his life—he knew despair. He felt himself stultified, awake at last to the world as it was. She looked, he thought, like a Bacchante. Lady Hamilton must have looked like that. If this was what they had made of her, then God did not live and reign.

A numbness took him, as he felt his heart go cold within him, cold and dead. It had the weight of a dead thing, and seemed to be dragging him down.

Mrs. Lancelot half sat on the edge of a table and swung her foot. Her dress, which was thin, close and clinging, was dragged up a little to ease her knee, and as her foot swung forward her stocking was revealed to some distance. Nobody of those about her could be aware of it, but Gervase at his distance away could not but see it. The attitude, the action, entirely innocent and unconscious as they were, wore for him a shocking air. They were of a piece with the rest. This young hermit of Clerkenwell was mortally wounded.

And as if she did what she should not, to him her attire was abhorrent—her attire and the absence of it. Her

dress was, in fact, becoming in its daring. It was of thin silk, of a dull Pompeian red, deeply hemmed and fringed with gold. In her hair she wore a gold wreath. The gown clung to her and revealed her form, thin, but exquisitely proportioned to her slender build. It was low in the neck and showed freely half her bosom. But its color took what little she had clean away. She looked almost wan. And in this ivory pale face, her large eyes burned black, and her lips, which she had perhaps colored, looked scarlet. She was happy, or excited; for her eyes laughed, and her teeth flashed. She was surrounded by a demilune of six or seven men of various ages, and among them, conspicuous by his white head, square, strong face, erect carriage and air of authority, was the Duke of Devizes, with the blue ribbon and star of his order. Another gartered grandee was there also; and there were young men about her, splendid, groomed creatures, one of whom with great vivacity was paying her open court. And his "little slim thing" sat swinging her foot, painted and powdered, and listened and thrilled at the flattery. Bought and sold like a Circassian—O Christ!

Gervase clenched his teeth, clenched his fists, and as if, like the God he invoked, he was about to scourge the money changers out of the temple, he pushed directly forward to his business.

A few strides brought him within range, and then she saw him. Not only did she see him, and know him at once, but she saw that he was disturbed, and on her account, that he was about to visit his displeasure upon her, that she, somehow, deserved it, and that it became her at least, to meet it more than halfway. All these feelings, half formed, rising like figures out of mist and sinking back again, were within her in the few seconds she had to spare. Her sparkle and wax-light glitter left her; her face looked tragic in its pale vacuity; her eyes loomed. She slid off the table on which she was airily perched and advanced immediately to meet Gervase. The men about her sprang aside to give her place. All observed the oncomer, the Duke curiously, after his manner.

Of course it may have been charity on her part, pure benevolence; recognizing him, she may have guessed that he was unfriended and seen that he was disturbed. It may have been so, but I doubt it. Her own feelings of detected unworthiness cannot be gainsaid, her own acceptance of his reasonable displeasure, her own readiness to be chastened. As for him, he was so possessed by his passion that he had no coherent thought apart from it.

She held out her hand and greeted him by name. "Mr. Poore?" He did not see the hand; his eyes were fixed upon her own, intently, piercing, as she felt, to the soul. But he muttered something, seemed rather to be stemming a torrent of words with his mouth than framing their utterance; she caught, "I must speak to you—not here—this hateful place—let us go—let us go——" Without a word she took command.

"Yes, of course. Give me your arm, please." She put her hand within it as she spoke, and urged him gently away. As they went out of the doorway she turned, nodding and smiling, to the Duke, keenly observant of her. He bowed. Then she hurried her steps, almost running by the side of her fierce escort.

CHAPTER XIX.

EXTRAORDINARY CONVERSATION.

Some prevision of the crisis in her soul's affairs must have prompted her to the bold step she took, when she guided the burning and irresistible progress of the poet to her own drawing-room in this great house. Neither of them had spoken throughout the

transit; that is, their lips had framed no words. But messages flew between them. Without a word spoken her soul said to his: "Ah, I know what you have to say to me! I know, I know that you love me. What am I to do? You have a wisdom not of this world where all my schooling has been. Teach me, teach me; I will learn." And from him came the stern admonition: "You! What have you to do in this horde of gaping satyrs? Are you Circe, to make men swine? Do you play with hyenas, apes, and jackals? What has your nature to do with these?" And hers cried, "Teach me, teach me!" And his, touched with pity, replied, "The way is hard for you."

In her room she sat and looked at her hands, as one twisted round and about a ring upon a finger of the other. He, with his arms folded, stood frowning above her, breathing fast, trying to bring his heart back into its stride, as with the rein one schools a galloping horse. Her own emotion was insistent, but her social instinct was awake, and it was she, under the guiding of that, who first broke the beating silence.

"You came very late. I expected to see you earlier."

"I came when I could. I was writing."

"Ah! Another poem? Your poems are beautiful."

"It was you who made them so."

"I can't think that. Your poetry is a part of yourself."

"It was in me; but you called it out. There is nothing in my book which is not of you."

She was in command by this time, felt that she could smile at his foolishness.

"I don't think I can realize that. Was 'Leda' about me?"

"No, of course not. But those things are nothing. They were done long ago."

"I shouldn't like to think that I inspired them."

"You did not. I spoke of what was good."

"Of 'Nausithoë?'"

"Yes. That is you. That is your life—a life in shadow, clasping, clasped by, a shadow. A life of unreality."

"I was sure that you did not approve—that you were displeased. What right have you to be pleased or displeased with my life?"

"The right that one who loves you has to be pleased or displeased with what pleases or displeases you. You are not happy, you know your life to be vain."

She lifted up her head quickly. She was flushed. "Ah, you must not say that. You have no possible right. And it is not true. I have my duties to perform. I believe that I do them. They are not, perhaps, in your world, but they are very real. You are unjust to me."

It was one of those moments when the soul must have its way; and perhaps Poore was one of those persons who can say without offense what others can never approach; one of those persons absolutely serious and occupied with the affair of the moment.

He said—and she was not offended: "You have also a duty to yourself. Unless you perform it, you are maimed, and cannot avail to anybody. Two men love you, but you love neither. How can a woman avail unless she love? It is her whole nature. It is her function. Without it she is a phantom, an empty vase. Lovely you are, but you are empty. Fill yourself. Love!"

She was not offended, but she was very troubled. She faltered and made to look up at him. Then she found that she could not do it.

"What do you know of me?" she asked of her fingers.

"Everything," said Poore. "I have seen you countless times since I saw you first. I think that for three years, whenever you have been in London, I have seen you every night of the week."

"I don't understand—that is not possible—I have never seen you."

"You have looked full upon me sometimes, but you have not seen me. I have seen you."

Curiosity was now awake. She forgot her bashfulness. "When have you seen me? Where?"

"I have seen you at your parties. I have seen you go in and come out. I have stood with the outcasts at the doors and waited for you. In rain, snow, sleet, and slush—on hot summer nights, in fog and mist, I have been there. Sometimes you have been to two, sometimes to three great houses. I have followed you—by scent, I believe. You have a fragrance which I could follow over the world. I have heard you speak—a word here, a word there. I have heard you laugh, and have wept to hear you—for the laughter was thin, from the head and not the heart. I know the turns of your head, the glances of your eyes—I tell you that I know everything about you. You are not yet born. If you have a soul, it resides not in your lovely body, but hovers on the outside, seeking an entry, beating with its hands at the door of your heart. You are the slave of your circumstance—you cannot do otherwise than be so because you do not know of your servitude. You know neither your powers nor your rights. The one could demand the other, and exact them. But you drift, a phantom—loving not at all, loved phantom-wise. Two men love you, I say, but you can satisfy neither. Two men? How many more love your delicate, your exquisite person? But one man loves your soul, that lovely, winged thing fluttering without you, a-cold, trying to get in."

She sat immovable under this wild apostrophe, immovable as to the limbs; but her short-rising breast and little involuntary starts and tremors betrayed her. She did not raise her eyes for one moment. Her lips moved, and she said, scarcely above a whisper: "You must not say so. You must not love me. You have no right——"

"No right?" asked he. "Do you deny me the right to live? And how can I live but by love? And how can I help loving what I see so excellently love-worthy? That which I adore in you was not sold with the rest. Men do not chaffer the light of the sun, or the west wind that blows over pasture fields, or the rain that washes the flanks of the hills. They fence in the mountains and call them theirs; but the wind bloweth where it listeth; and blows from you to me—and in that air I live and have my being. Do you deny me that?"

She would not. "No, no—that would be absurd. But—I am nobody. You cannot love me without——"

"Credentials? Applying with all forms observed to your proprietors? No, I can't do that. But I tell you that I know you all. I have access to that in you which the world sees nothing of. For at least I am a real man. I dare to love Nausithoë really, and they—shadows!—as shadows."

He spoke in deadly earnest, with a cold intensity rather terrible. Nothing but his obvious sincerity could have excused him in her eyes—in the clear light of that she understood him, accepted him, and believed him. She did not speak for some moments, but sat turning her ring about on her finger, not displeased, rather pleased in fact, conscious of a certain elation at being the chosen of so singular a person, conscious also of having been recaptured by the genius of Nausithoë. That was an elation of the kind which the Duke's notice had afforded her long ago, was perhaps no more, but was certainly no less.

Added to that, she was conscious of trouble. His vehemence disturbed her. She did not understand him, yet she felt that his passion for her was not of the kind which the Duke, say, professed.

The Duke, she fancied, had of her what he was entitled to have, and anything more that he desired of her was not lawful, and not pleasant. She knew that the Duke's relations with women had not been generally very pleasant. But this young man's passion was different. There was perhaps some sanction for his professions. He had insight: she felt that he knew her—knew her better than either of the men with whom she lived—better than either of them ever could know her. He knew, for instance, that she needed love. Ah, how did he know that, when until she read his poem she had not known it herself? Positively, she found it out from his assertion of it as a fact.

Love! Love! Not to be loved, but to love. There was her need. She was hungry. She was starved. Well, if this young man, uncompromising, fierce, abrupt, bad-mannered—if he were to love her, might she not love him? She turned it awfully in her mind. It was a glowing speculation there—no more than that. And she had a suspicion that if she did come to love him, he would be extraordinarily tender to her: and then she had another, that if she did come to love him, she could make him happy. Her eyes were wide and unblinking as she pondered these things.

She it was, nevertheless, who broke the silence; for Poore, having said what he had, said no more, but stood with his elbow on the mantelpiece, looking down at her and scowling manfully.

She said: "You have told me very strange things. I don't know what to answer. I ought to be angry, but I am not. I am sure that you mean what you say, or believe that you do. I don't wish to be unreasonable, and I hope that you will not be. What shall you say if I ask you not to watch me come and go to parties?"

He replied without moving. "If you insist, I shall have to obey you. But you will be making things hard for me. Reflect. I shan't see you at all on those terms."

"Won't you come here?" she asked him. "Should you refuse if I——"

He raised his eyebrows. "This is the Duke's house, I suppose?"

"No," said she, "this is my husband's house."

"I dislike your husband more than I can say," he told her. She was very patient with him.

"That is not very polite of you. He has done you no harm."

"No," he said, "but he has done you untold harm. He has married you, used you, and now resents it. 'It!' He does worse. He resents you. He is wounded, he is jealous. Do you call such a man a lover? He loves himself."

"Hush, please. I cannot hear you. My husband is very good to me. He respects me."

"I deny that," said Poore. "He respects himself far too much. He doesn't even know what he has done amiss."

She did not ask him what that was, because she knew. Womanlike, she turned to safer topics—safer because they affected him personally, and would therefore draw him off Charles.

"About your vigils," she cried. "Will you give them up?"

He was silent until she lifted her head and looked her appeal into his eyes.

"Don't ask me that," he said then. "I have no other means of seeing you. And if I see you now—after to-night—perhaps you will sometimes recognize me." He waited. "Do you think that you will?"

She smiled faintly, nodded her head very slightly. "Perhaps." She grew more positive. "Yes, I think that I shall. But I shall hate to think of you there—with those wretched people."

"Ah!" he said. "They are not so wretched as the people in this great house. At least they can afford to be

real. The people here—as I see them——" She suddenly touched him by a look. Her eyes, full of anxiety, reached his.

"I hear my husband coming. I shall present you to him," she said quickly. "Please be kind to me," he read in her look.

"I will do anything in the world for you," he told her.

Charles entered. His eyes made no sign. He came sedately to where she sat.

"The Duke has been asking for you, my dear. I had no notion where you were; but he suggested that you were here."

"Let me introduce Mr. Poore to you," she said. "This is my husband, Mr. Poore."

Charles was courteous, held out his hand. "I am pleased to make your acquaintance. Your poems have merit."

Poore accepted the greeting. "Thank you. It is kind of you to say so." He turned to Georgiana.

"I have kept you from your affairs. That's bad. You have been more than kind to me."

She denied that. "No, indeed! You have—interested me very much. I hope you will come to see us before we leave town."

He bowed stiffly. She got up and took his arm. "Let us go back. You must be presented to the Duke."

Charles said: "The Duke will be charmed. He is in the library, my dear." He opened the door for her.

She asked him, "Don't you come with us?"

"No, I have work to do, I fear. Besides I am out of my element in a ballroom."

"So then must I be," she laughed. "For I never dance, as you know." Charles bowed to her.

"My dear, you would grace any room you entered. I think, if you will permit, I will say good night." She gave him her hand, and he kissed it. He bowed to Poore, who bent his head.

The Duke in the library with a few people, gave Poore his usual allowance of fingers. "How do, how do? You're a monopolist, I see. So am I, and that's where you and I shall quarrel."

"I hope not," said Gervase.

"You're a heavy-weight, I judge. Nine stun six is about my figure. I've a good wind, Mr. Poore. But I don't write poetry. Now let me tell you this. I thought yours devilish good in places. I used to read Propertius when I was a lad. I thought you had him very neatly. 'Nausithoë' I don't care for, though Mrs. Lancelot here gave it some tears, I believe. What's your profession, Mr. Poore?"

"I am a lawyer," said Gervase. The Duke approved.

"That's a healthy trade. That needs precision. It won't teach you rhyming, but it will teach you the advantage of definite statement. You have to know what you want in the law."

"I think that I have learned that," said Gervase. Georgiana agreed with him. She watched him now and then, caught a glimpse of him in sidelong flashes of her eyes—which were very bright—and approved of him. The Duke seemed to have observed her animation, for he commented upon it.

"What's Mr. Poore been telling you? Pleasant things, I suspect."

"Very pleasant," said Georgiana.

The great man nodded his head quite amiably, then turned to the approval of the poet.

"It was you, I believe, who forestalled every one of us in Mrs. Lancelot's rescue. It was at Vauxhall, if I am right. You have an arm which I envy you—but you were prompt when we were not."

"I happened to be there," said Gervase. "That was my good fortune."

"You rescued her from very unpleasant companions."

"I should always be ready for that."

"Of course. But we may hope that she won't need such strenuous championship."

"I hope that also."

Georgiana felt the implication in his words, and shifted the ground.

"Tell me of your book," she said. "Have the reviewers been kind to you?"

Gervase smoothed his brow. "I think not very kind. I have the misfortune to live in London. They call me a Cockney poet, and think they have said all. They impute politics."

She laughed. "I don't read politics in your poetry."

"There is nothing of it—unless a wish to see men free be political." The Duke glanced at him.

"We don't talk so much of freedom here, Mr. Poore, as of duty."

"That," said Gervase, "seems to me the chief duty."

"Your Nausithoë used her freedom in a strange way." That was from the Duke.

"She never had any, according to me," Gervase said. "She was a slave from the beginning—the slave of assumptions."

Georgiana, with bright eyes, defended herself.

"I don't read that. Nausithoë chose to go down to Hades with Proserpine."

"Proserpine," said Gervase, his eyes full upon her, "assumed that she would go. She took it for granted, and Nausithoë accepted it. She had no soul. She was not born."

"According to you," said the Duke dryly, "the poor lady never was."

"The poem is unfinished, my lord," Gervase replied. "It is my intention to show her gaining of her soul." Georgiana had nothing to say to this delicate topic, and the Duke, who had now had enough of Mr. Poore, turned to her with others in which the young man could have no part. Had she seen Lady A——? She ought to be spoken with. And would Georgiana go to the D——s' ball on the 27th? He had promised to look in.

Gervase, who stood his ground uneasily, and not for long, took his leave stiffly, hiding but ill the despair that was in him. She noticed that, and was rather more *empressée* than her wont was. Her eyes sought his, and saw the storm in them. Before that she was powerless, and only anxious that he should go. Their looks met; but she was very guarded. He could read nothing in her which betokened the slightest consciousness of what had so lately passed between them. "Good God!" he cried in his bitterness. "Is it possible that she is heartless? A few moments ago, and she heard me tell her of my love. She sat and let the words beat upon her; she sat a Danaë to the rain. But she was moved; her bosom was unquiet; her eyes felt the light. And now she can meet me hardily and dismiss me and my business. I am nothing—my gospel an incident in the night's doings! What can be made of such women as this? O God, my beloved! Without a soul!" He went desperately into the night.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SOUL OF GEORGIANA.

The Duke, who saw most things, was very curious, and had to be satisfied. She told him much; he guessed the remainder.

"The youth is in love with you," he told her; and added, "I don't wonder. Now, you may be very valuable to him. I should have him here if I were you. Let him pour himself out into your lap. Then you can whip him up into some kind of a shape and put him all back into his case again. He's rather in the rough, you know."

Georgiana listened and smiled at her tolerant friend. He encouraged her.

"I shan't be jealous. That's not my way. But I don't answer for Charles. You may scare poor Charles."

She bent her head. "I mustn't do that. It will make him unhappy."

"My dear child," said the Duke dryly, "with three pretenders, you must make somebody unhappy. The great thing is that it's not you. Now, as a rule, you'll find that when men and women get involved in a common venture, it's the men who come off best. So it will be here if we don't take care. You good little soul!"—and he bent over her chair—"I take my oath that you shan't get scratched by me. But I don't answer for Charles."

No more could she answer for that stately sufferer.

"I'll tell you what, Georgie," the Duke said, "I'll talk to Master Charles for you, if you like."

She looked up quickly, rather scared. "Oh!" she said, "what shall you say to him?"

"Tell him that he's a donkey," said the Duke, "and that if he's not careful he'll be a rogue donkey. What do you say?"

She appealed, smiling still. He understood her long gaze, but maliciously made her speak.

"Well, missy?"

"I would rather you said nothing. You can't help him, or me either. Pray don't speak of it."

"Oh, naturally I will not, if you don't relish the idea."

She assured him, "I don't relish it at all." He patted her shoulder.

"Then no more about it. Let us return to our poet, who may be sublime, but between you and me is a cub. I see you at a useful work—an act of mercy: giving wisdom to the simple." He stopped, then added, "I shan't be jealous," and waited to enjoy her blush —which he did. "Ask him here, my dear," he said then.

She shook her head. "He won't come."

"Ho! Won't he though? You try him."

"Really, he won't. He's very proud."

"What's he proud of? I'll bet you my cocked hat he won't be too proud to come here."

But she was positive, nodding positive. "Yes. He says that this is your house—which of course it is."

"Which of course it isn't. However, assuming the house to be mine, I still don't follow him."

"Oh," said she, looking up, "he doesn't approve of you."

The Duke took that simply. "He's quite right there, though I don't know that it's any business of his. Nor do I see—— Bless me, what a gossoon it is! I'll trouble you for the counts of his indictment."

"He thinks," said Georgiana, "that you are not real."

"Pish! He must do better than that."

"He calls you a phantom."

"Upon my soul," said the Duke, looking at his legs, "that's the last thing I am." He gave her a very keen look, which she felt—not daring to receive it full—through the top of her head. "And he calls you Nausithoë, I suppose?"

She did not answer. "What do you say to that, Mrs. Georgie?"

She replied murmurously, "I don't think you're a phantom."

"I should think you didn't," he chuckled. "You know me better than that; you're not Nausithoë for any default of mine. And *he* won't think so either, by and by, when he begins to——" A movement of hers stopped him. "Never mind, my dear. You don't love me, I know, and I'm a philosophical fellow, though they *have* made me a peer. I take what I can get and am grateful to you."

She took his hand suddenly and kissed it. "You are very kind to me, Duke." He patted her cheek, then stooped and kissed her without protest. He looked at his watch.

"I must go down to the House. My fellow phantom has been there these two hours. Where am I dining? In your company?"

"No," she told him, "Charles and I are dining here. "Mr. Croker is coming, and you refused to meet him—don't you remember?"

"Yes, yes. Not even for your bright eyes! Do you go out afterward?"

"Oh, I suppose we do. Shall I look?"

She went to her desk and perused her diary. "Yes, we are at the Sufflecks'. Shall you come?"

"Certainly I shall if you are to be there. Tom Moore will sing, I suppose, and have all the women weeping. Not you!"

"No, I shan't weep. I'll ask Mr. Moore about the poet."

"The other poet. Your poet. Yes, yes. I like that youth, you know. He thinks I'm a phantom?"

"He said you were a murderer, too."

"So I am," said the Duke. "God knows!"

Then he went away, and left her to herself and her thoughts.

They were long, but vague—vaguely pleasurable, vaguely despondent. She did not understand whither she was floating now, in what current, in what company in the tideway. Pleasure came to her, a stirring of the pulse, a flutter of the heart, as she thought of Gervase who, for love of her, chance caught, had for three years waited for her with outcasts at the doors of great houses; who for love of her had heard sweet and wild music; who for love of her spoke boldly as, surely, man had never spoken to woman before, at a first meeting. Was it not extraordinary that she should have won such love as she had—his, flashed into his heart at one blow, in one moment, and the Duke's, almost the same in origin? What did this mean? What had she done? What was she? What could she do in return? What had she left to give? Gratitude—and that was all.

No, not all. She gave the Duke more than that. When all was said, it had cost her something to take this position with him in the eyes of the world—those judging eyes askance which it gave her, withal it smiled and bowed before her. And, to be perfectly honest with herself, this had not been done solely to advance Charles. No, no, that was not true. And now came the question—ought she to tell Charles as much?

She was not only very conscientious, she was very tender hearted, and could not bear to see him suffer. Now, anxious as he had been for the friendship between his wife and his patron to ripen to his own advantage, he suffered atrociously under it, and, she judged, would give the world to undo what had been done. Some of it, she told herself, could never be undone. Never, nevermore, could she go back to Charles as she had come to him as a bride. Never, never. But short of that she would do anything for him and spare him suffering by any assurance he pleased. Such assurance must come from her, however. If the Duke had spoken to him, things would have been made worse; that was why she had begged him to say nothing. And if she herself said anything, she didn't know what might not be the outcome. Charles was so made that it was torture to him to speak of intimate matters. He had never in all their wedded life so spoken to her. He was a born prude. She, on the other hand, was not. She was naturally direct in outlook, direct in apprehension, direct in expression. She was essentially simple, innocent minded, and honest. He was complex, really prurient, and expression made him

shame-faced. She was very undecided what she ought to do.

One thing was clear. Nothing to him of Gervase Poore. So long as the poet did not come to the house that would be easy, and the unhappy Charles need know nothing. And she decided, on other grounds, that she should not ask Gervase to Wake House. She wanted to see if he stood on the watch for her comings and goings; she wanted to see him, if he did so stand; she wanted him to see her; she wanted to greet him with the eyes. She smiled to herself half shrewdly, half ashamed, as she faced and acknowledged these desires. Tribute! Yes, and sweet tribute. She had been married five years, and had come to the understanding of her charms. She was at a dangerous age; and she found danger sweet.

After dinner, when she and Charles drove up to the Sufflecks' in Berkeley Square, she was conscious of heart-beats. She saw, by leaning sideways, the crowd about the doors, and her excitement grew. Immediately she was on the strip of baize she was aware of Gervase. He was in the front rank, bare-headed, and seemed to tower above her. She dared, however, to lift her eyes, to encounter and to hold his. She felt that she spoke with hers; but knew that his said nothing. She was conscious of loss, of a sinking heart; thought that he was vexed with her. It was true, she was late, and he must have been there for at least an hour—oh, how could she tell him of her dinner party and of the insufferable length of Mr. Croker's anecdotes! The door shut upon her, and left him outside. She wished that she could turn back, open the door again, speak to him, tell him how sorry she was. Then she went upstairs, with her face schooled to company, and shook hands with a Lady Laura, who had been a beauty, and with Mr. Suffleck, who had not.

The rooms were full and very hot; the people chattered like starlings in September. To chatter also was now become so much of a habit that she could think behind her speeches. Think she did, piercingly, with a heart full of generous pity and of high admiration at once for her watching lover. She had, you observe, accepted that assumption of his; and we know that she had been the victim of assumptions. But this particular assumption must be put down to his manner of statement. He had been very positive, but very literal also.

Mr. Moore was there, sang to his own playing and had, as the Duke had foretold, rivers of tears at his feet. Lady Laura herself, fine woman, every foot of her, heaved and sobbed unfeignedly. Georgiana did not cry, but was moved to confide somewhat to the tender care of so sweet a minstrel. This, after her manner, she did not do. She distrusted her impulses while she found food for the imagination in fostering them.

It was, however, easy to get speech with Tom, whose romantic habit consisted with a good deal of shrewd practice. Tom knew very well that the Duke had no liking for him. His court to the Duke's favorite was, therefore, assiduous while, recognizing her charm, it was also sincere. He did not know her well, did not perhaps know more than her superficies; but that delighted him. Her "sweet baby face," her eyes' deep blue, her Greek mouth, her straight brow—he exchanged raptures on these topics with any man. Upon her approach he made her most welcome and himself gave her the opening she sought.

"So I pleased ye, with me penny whistle! Mrs. Lancelot, I'm a proud man. Contented entirely! And it comes from your kind lips with all the more balm seeing that I was the means of submitting to your notice, ma'am, a very organ of sound the other day. Me young friend Gervase, to wit. Me dear

lady, the boy's a string band compared with meself. A string band he is, with himself the drum-major at the head of ut. Now what did ye think of Gervase? Let us sit and exchange ideas."

Nothing could have suited her better. She wished to know all there was to be known of Gervase.

Tom told her his history. Son of a gentleman, one Captain Christopher Poore, an East India Company's man, and of a foreign lady—French, he believed—name unknown to him. She, a widow, lived in retirement upon a narrow pension in Dulwich; Gervase was her only child. Educated at Christ's Hospital, where he was always in trouble—for fighting with all and sundry; articled at eighteen to an attorney; was now a clerk on a small salary, and not at all likely to do well with the law. He had, besides, an income of fifty pounds a year from the funds. Tom shook his head over the boy's future. He was too stiff, too unaccommodating to succeed in Grub Street. He would look at nothing but what he chose, and treated a publisher as if he were a dog. He was very ambitious, very opinionated, very arrogant—but very lovable.

"At least," said he, "I love him. He despises me, I don't doubt, calls me a time-server and the likes of that. But he's got a noble heart, Mrs. Lancelot, a generous heart. He's on fire for truth and beauty; he sees the high things and follows them; I see 'em, God forgive me, and don't. After an hour or two of Gervase's conversation I feel as if I had had a day on the mountains—worn out, ma'am, but cleansed—healthily tired. He spares himself nothing, and he spares his friend nothing. He claims all you have, but he gives you all. There are no bounds to him—'tis the most exorbitant, unconscionable, avaricious young prodigal you ever saw!"

She absorbed all this seriously. It fell in with her own fancies about Gervase. She had been very sensible of his vehemence. But as to his poetry she desired to know something. Tom thought that he was a true poet and might be a great one.

"He's not a minstrel, you must know, ma'am, but a bard. His music is a solemn music; his ideas are for chanting. He sees life as a procession—not as a pastoral—a sweep onward to high destinies, not as a sunny pasture where lambs can skip. Love to him is an invocation to a mystery. There should be neither tears nor laughter—it's a great business. I can see him possessed by it, robing for it in white garments; he would take the sacrament before he kissed his mistress. Wouldn't dare else. You knew he was a Catholic? No? Ah, but he is, though, and I wouldn't be the priest that confessed him. He'd scold the poor man into an ague before he'd let him give the good words. He's a great man in the rough, is Gervase. Do you know what he's at now? 'The Song of Roland,' no less. He's at it night and day—and marches the pavement chanting Roland and Oliver, and Aude, the fair. Did you ever read the pome, Mrs. Lancelot? 'Tis fine, free moving, bloody stuff. But that's only a piece of what he's at. He's got Charlemagne at the back of his head. Will make an epic of him! And Aude, the fair! 'Tis my belief he'll make a lovely lady of her."

Mrs. Lancelot was interested. Her eyes shone. "Who was Aude the fair?" she asked.

Tom twinkled.

"'Twas the beloved of Roland, fair lady. You must get our young friend to give you a taste of her quality. I declare that I'm at her feet meself."

Mrs. Lancelot was very much interested.

Going away, she had the arm of the Duke, and Charles, as usual, brought up the rear. It was so late that she had not expected to see Gervase; yet there

he was, impending over her like a cliff. Her heart gave a leap and she felt giddy —but she knew that she was glad, knew that she was proud, knew that she was grateful.

Fate led her so close to him as almost to touch his cloak with her own. She dared not look up, but passed under his gaze as a bird under the shadow of a kite, and flitted into the carriage as if it had been a furze bush. She felt her eyelids flicker as she passed him. From her place of safety she peered out. He stood there looking after her, not moving from the place. She had a fear that he might not have seen her perhaps, that he would wait on and on till they put the lights out and took up the carpet. If he did that, she thought, what sort of passion would take him home—to Clerkenwell! Alas, no staves of Roland and Aude the fair would drive his footsteps! The thought tormented her.

She endured a fortnight or more of this curious and heart-probing experience. Sometimes he was not at his post, and then she was unhappy; mostly he was, and then she was uneasy. Sometimes she dared to exchange a long glance with him, sometimes she tried to let him see that she was grateful for the tribute, sometimes that she was pained at his pain. She could charge her eyes with appeal, with thank you, with *Non sum digna*, with "Yesterday —I looked for you," but she could get no answer. She could not even be sure that he saw her at all. He looked at her, it's true, fully at her, but without implication, and without recognition. He looked at her as a statue looks at its beholder, to comprehend the whole, but not to discover. It was impossible to take offense; there was no obtrusion: impossible to get comfort; there was no acknowledgment.

Her imagination, naturally ardent, was fired, became acutely inflamed. His life, his dreams, his music, his sufferings swept before her in a series of vivid pictures. She came soon to understand that this nightly strain could not be endured by her, but by him could be indefinitely endured. She felt herself weakening, and knew him very strong. Then she had a curious discovery. She knew perfectly well, one morning when she woke, that she would have to end it.

End it she did, by writing him a letter to the care of his publishers. Hesitating between the proper "Dear Sir," and the sincerer "Dear Mr. Poore," she finally began without address. She asked him to call upon her, naming an hour and day, and signed herself plainly without protestations of service.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CROWN.

He replied that he could not come on the day named, nor on any day but Sunday, until eight o'clock in the evening; an awkward hour. But he expressed no anxiety one way or another as to whether he should come or not, and she had to fit him in on her own desire. She did it by throwing over a dinner engagement and leaving Charles to go alone. Charles was unsuspicious, but the Duke, who also had to be told, looked humorously at her, with twinkling eyes. He said nothing, however. She wrote to Gervase again, naming day and suitable hour. He replied that he would be there.

She was very nervous and expected to find the preliminaries difficult; but he was evidently one of those to whom there are none; one of those who live, whether solitary or in company, in permanent crisis; who import their neighbors bodily into the midst of what scene they may be enacting at the moment. So it was now. It was as if he had been awaiting her, regaling himself with fervent soliloquy, which he continued upon her entry with only a slight change

of direction—addressing it now to her instead of to the auditory. The man-servant announced him, and she half rose at the name; rose fully as he came in, advanced, and held out her hand. She had dined early and was not in full dress, had modified her toilet simply but withal carefully. As he came to her she saw the crisis in his eyes.

"There's mystery about your clothes," he told her immediately. "I have never seen you before except dressed for a ball. You are still beautiful, but you are not more human. I think that you are more remote the nearer one gets to you. You are only half human. You have a fairy progenitor somewhere. Morgan le Fay, perhaps, or Vivien, who lured Merlin into an oak tree with hopes of love, and shut him in there, closing up the gnarly bark till his voice sounded muffled, and his groaning like the wind about the house on winter nights. Have you a heart? Kindness you have, I know: the fairy people are kind. They indulge themselves so. It is as pleasant for them to do kindness as it is for us. But they have no needs as we have. They want nothing but what they can take; they never want to give. That is our great need, to give and not to take. To me now my need makes me cry out. I want to give of my very virtue—to feel it well out of me, to feel—pouf! but what am I saying? But you have no such grief. You smile faintly, wisely; you absorb me with your great eyes; and not me only, but whomsoever they light upon. It seems to me that no man can look on you without desire. You hurt me, you trouble me, you drain me of my force. I was happy before I saw you—now I waste in effort to reach you. But you are out of reach."

This was what he had made out of her in the course of his vigils, and this he gave her while she stood, trembling slightly, fluttering rather faintly before him, as a white moth discovered by the light stands motionless but for a quiver of her wings.

Her dismay gave place to a disappointment so sharp as to fill her eyes with tears. All her anticipations had been pleasurable. She had enjoyed every moment of them—the little mystifications she had had to employ, to Charles, to the Duke—the letter writing; then the preparation—new flowers for the room, coquetry at the toilet table—her excitement as the hour approached, and then—and then—this cloudburst. Her lip trembled, she could not check her tears. He saw them—at first unmoved.

She stammered: "You are unkind. What have I done? Oh, you are unjust to me!"

He was soon moved—he came to her side—but she motioned him away.

"It is abominable, what you say to me. What have I done to you? Nothing. I had never seen you since that evening at Vauxhall—and you charge me with draining you! What do you mean? I wish you would leave me—it is abominable."

"Yes, I will leave you," he said coldly. "It will be better."

He bowed to her and turned away. In a flash she saw that if he went he would resume his attendance at doors, and she knew that she could not bear it. She held out her hands, and called to him.

"Mr. Poore!" He turned, saw her, went swiftly back, took both her hands, and knelt at her knees. He hid his face in her hands.

"O God, I am a villain! O God, forgive me!"

She may be excused for thinking it was her forgiveness he sought. "Of course I forgive you. Please to get up. You distress me—and distress yourself. Please to get up."

He rose, but still held her hands. He looked earnestly at her, and she saw

through her full eyes that his eyes were full. "I didn't know what I was saying. I was full of trouble. I have been beside myself. But you will forgive me."

"Oh, yes, yes," she assured him. "Indeed I will. I want you to be happy——"

"The thought of you makes me happy," he told her. "When I am well, the thought of your beauty fills me with joy. You make music wherever you go, like the fair lady of the nursery rime. For your beauty is vocal to me—I hear it as well as see it. Yours is a tranquil beauty; it seldom disturbs me. It has the serenity of Greece. I think of you as the embodiment of that divine air which Sophocles and Phidias breathed, and exhaled in music and in marble form."

He was contradicting himself, but seemed not to realize it. Nor did she. She glowed under his praises as she had cowered when he reproached her.

"Before I saw you," he went on, "I wandered uncertain of my purpose. Clouded forms floated across my field —I had nothing clear before me. Then you were revealed. I knew then—immediately—what I was called upon to do. To hymn you—to declare you to men—that was my mission. Well, I am about it. I am full of projects—they crowd upon me. I will write of you what was never yet written of a woman. A poet promised that before; but I'll better him. Let me talk to you about these things—— But you have forgiven me?"

Oh, yes, yes, she had forgiven him. He kissed both her hands before he let them fall. She sat and he at her feet.

He had his face between his hands, his elbows on his knees, and talked, and talked in a stream. It was an age of talkers, but she had never heard such talk as this.

Love was patent, unashamed. He not only assumed her acceptance of his homage, but her approval of it.

And she did approve. She accepted him and it on his own terms, as she had accepted Charles and the Duke on theirs; but there was a difference. With Charles she had followed the lines of duty; with the Duke flattery had led her; with Gervase it was enthusiasm for his tribute. It came to be very near enthusiasm for him. She hung upon his words, she hung over him with infinite tenderness, smiling gently down upon him where he sat by her knees on a footstool, and in her eyes, and veiling him from clear sight, was a mist of tears. How beautiful, how very beautiful were his words, his thoughts; how noble the thinker; how happy she! She felt as if she sailed high in air. His words were like strong wings which lifted her level with him and carried her safely as they oared the deep. He made her bosom sink and swell fast, he made her tears fall down upon it; he made her heart beat.

"Ah, but you and I together could face a world in arms—you and I together. That is what I dream of. I see the place—I see every detail. I could tell you what we shall do from hour to hour. I am certain, as I kneel here before you, that all this will come to pass." Then he ended, and:

"Oh," she sobbed. "Oh, if this were true!" and then he turned to her, upon his knees, and clasped her hands.

"Beloved, it *is* true—it *is* true—it is the one real thing in life at this moment. It is true because we know it, each of us. For once the cage doors are open and our hearts are brethren. My dear love, I love you—and I read love in your tender eyes. Ah, you love me, you love me! Is it not so? Tell me—speak to me—look at me."

She looked for a second through her tears—she turned away her face to hide her blushing—but she moved her head, and in a moment she was caught in his

arms. He kissed her fiercely and long; his lips held hers and drew the soul out of her body. They clung together, kissing, and then he suddenly let her go, and hid his face in her lap. Stooping over him, as a mother over her son, she put her hand on his head, and let her tears come as they would.

Presently he looked up and talked to her of the new world.

"A great life is begun from this moment. You and I are born whole and one into the world. Plato's allegory is in a fair way to be realized, for the two hemispheres are to be made one—a thing which does not happen once in ten thousand years. Observe exactly what has taken place. That which has been a fact for three years—a fact of my being—is now a fact of yours. My love is inseparable from yours, for it is confessed and accepted; yours from mine, for it is acknowledged and received. Now I can leave you for as long as you please, for my faith in you is absolute. You go your way, I go mine about this grubby town; but between us, wheresoever we fare, there stretches a golden thread, unbreakable, upon which, through which, run words, throbs of the heart, urgencies, cries of spirit; so we talk, see each other, kiss, clasp each other, as now we have. I shall go about my work triumphing; all England shall hear my song of songs; you go your sweet ways, ministering here and there, testifying so to the grace bestowed; raying forth in your beauty and grace the miracle which has been wrought in your heart. Don't think me arrogant if I say that your love for me will transfigure you, or that mine for you is a thing to enhance you, make you rarer and more sweet. It is good for you to love, and good to be loved. So, of course, it is with me. Other men love you, you say? No, don't shake your lovely head. I know that you don't say so. I have no jealousy of them—I am not so mean. I wish you to be loved; I wish all England knew how loveworthy you are. And it shall, it shall. But their love is not to you as mine, because it is no part of you. Mine is absorbed in your nature. Henceforth they who love you must love me, too—for you have received me as a sacrament—in the touching of our lips. Now I am in you, and you in me." Once more she received him into her arms, once more received his ardent kisses; and then she rested so, with his head upon her bosom.

By and by, finding her voice, she asked him as a kindness to her to cease his nightly watching at house doors.

"Of course," he said, "they cease. I shall see you more often and better. For we must meet. We shall have so much to say to each other. It is essential that we meet—often—every day, if possible. Indeed, every hour will be wasted in which we do not meet."

She laughed merrily—she was ridiculously happy, and felt it ridiculous.

"Oh, how foolish you are! Oh, how sweetly foolish! It hurts me to laugh at you, but how can I help it? My dearest boy, how can we meet? Do be serious. I think you must be mad. Why, you have your office to begin with—and I have Charles and the Duke to look after, poor dears. And then I have to go to stupid parties, and sit at long dinners, and write notes, and read notes, and see dressmakers—and very soon to go into the country. No, no, we must be very sensible over this, and you must be very good. Now promise me that you will."

He heard her quietly, and sat up, crossing his legs like a Turk, and frowning hard. "I give up my office, of course."

At this she raised an outcry. "Never in the world! Why, you'd be ruined. That's not to be thought of."

"It has been thought of," he said. "Indeed, it's as good as done. I spoke to Mr. Metcalfe about it to-day. He

agreed with me that I should never make an attorney; and I'm sure I never shall."

She was sobered. "Oh, my dear, this is very serious. Do you assure me that you must——"

"I assure you, my dearest, that I was never more serious. Poetry is henceforward the occupation of my life—poetry and you."

"Ah!" she began to say, but he took ner hand and looked up into her face.

"My dear one, my dear one, do you doubt my powers? Never do that. I have found myself, my strength. I know what I can do. And you see, I shall be able to see you much more frequently now than ever before. This day week I shall be a free man."

She was afraid, of course; but he had his way of talking her over—which was not all talking, though done with the lips. She promised to see him when she could; had no clearer promise to make—nor did he ask it of her. Arrangements were to be left to her, he said. Whatever she found good would be good—and so forth.

With that, or the sequels of that, he left her, the glad and confident young man, stooping from his height to catch her to his breast, stroking her face as she nestled in his arms, bending down to whisper his tender words of love and adoration of her quiet beauty, until she felt her brain spin with the wonder and strength of them and of him. Finally he tore himself away, looked at her, held her again long in his arms, kissed her near to swooning, and swept out of the room and out of the house. She saw him stride down Piccadilly, but he did not look up.

She would have been thrilled to hear of his last act before he left the region. Near Down Street a poor painted thing, a wisp of frippery and sorrow, stopped him with her preposterous proposal. She was half-hearted, she faltered, for she had remarked his haste. But Gervase, who always did the incalculable thing, stopped and took her by the arm.

"I must tell somebody—and why not you? What you ask me is absurd, and I'll tell you why. I am to be the happiest as I am already the proudest man in the world. I love, I am loved; is not that enough? Happy—O God!" He threw his head up to the stars, and laughed aloud. "But you—you are not going to be happy. No, no. But it shan't be my fault." He plunged for a coin. "Live honest, my dear, this night, and pray for me by a clean pillow." He gave her a crown-piece and flashed on his way. She thought him a god, burst out crying, kissed the coin, and held out her arms after him in the dark.

CHAPTER XXII.

FIRST FRUITS.

It did not need the Duke's perspicacity to discover the preoccupations of his Egeria during the remainder of the season. The facts that her attentiveness to his claims was redoubled, and that more tenderness was employed in his service were of themselves enough to convince him. He was touched to see how she hovered over him, how she lingered in her farewells at temporary separations; for if she left him for half a day or a couple of hours she bade him good-by, and offered him her smooth cheek. He was very much touched; but he divined the cause, and even got satisfaction out of it. Strange, chill-blooded, well-balanced voluptuary that he was, where his appetite was not concerned, he could be as sentimental as any æsthetic philosopher you please; and it is a fact that he promised himself distinct and precise enjoyment out of the spectacle of Georgiana deep in the bath of her first affair of the heart.

Something that he had said to her a few days after the appearance of "Nausithoë" might have enlightened her, but did not. It was made plain

that he had read the work. It was lying on her table, and he picked it up.

"A queer fish, the poet," said he; "but a keen-sighted dog, too. Do you see the hang of it all?"

She had thought so. "Yes, I suppose so. I understand it, if you mean that."

"'Remember'd joy, Nausithoë!'" he quoted, and ran on for a few lines. "Now what a thing for a woman that is—to have 'remember'd joy' to fall back upon."

She bent over her needlework, glowed over it with a keen intensity of vision, and her brows knitted. He watched her for a while, then went on.

"I'm no poet myself, but I must say that your man's got a thought into this thing. How many women have phantom lovers! Thousands, by George, thousands! Now, Georgie, mark this. No man has a phantom mistress. Never, never! That's certain. But when we are out to-night—wherever it may be—I'll undertake to show you the women with phantom partners—husbands or lovers, it's all one." He looked at her again sharply. "And sometimes, my dear, they have both, and get nothing but emptiness out of either."

Her head was deeply bent, her chin close to her bosom. But she looked up presently, and fixed him fully with her serious blue eyes. "They know no better," she said, "and feel no need."

To that he countered, "But if they do, and when they do—what then?"

Her outlook was dreary. "They have to learn to accept consequences. They are better at paying their debts than men are."

"My dear," he said gently, "I would help you if I could."

She shook her head, smiling kindly at him with her good eyes.

"You can't. There's nothing to be done. I have my ghosts, and like Nausithoë must content myself. I can dream, you know."

He turned to the window. "You can't live on dreams," he told her. Yet that was precisely what this least dreamy of men was himself doing.

But just at this time, without the least suspicion on her part that he saw anything, he had begun to see his Nausithoë in a fair way to have a lover of flesh and blood. This would be no dreamer, he warranted. He was not by any means sure how it would prove, but he fancied that she would finally claim more than a shade. He had to face that, and get what comfort for himself he could out of it. Whatever was to happen to her, he thought, she would get some flesh on her dear bones, some blood into her worn cheeks, and a dewier touch of magic in her eyes. All that, said he, was surely to the good! Georgiana, he thought, would dazzle the world, as she had dazzled him already, when the Fairy Godmother touched her so with the wand.

The upshot interested him vastly; he saw nothing but satisfaction to come out of it. As for himself, he was, I have affirmed, either a sensualist or a sentimentalist; but never both at once. Georgiana had him on the latter side, though there had been a time when it might have been otherwise. But he knew very well the worth of a woman's No, and that moment of tensity, when, held in his arms, still, quivering with her passion for honor, she had fought him for her soul, had been for him the moment of the most absolute defeat he had ever had. He knew himself. He knew her. She was as safe now with him as one of his daughters, and a thousand times more dear. Moreover—and here you have the man—she would never stint him of his dues, never fail him: that he knew. *Bocca baciata non perde ventura.* He observed, with a twinkle, that since her happiness had brimmed over—so that she actually flitted singing about the house, and could be heard singing to herself as he stood outside the door—he observed, I

say, that she was more effusive with him; was freer with her endearments, her touchings, and laying-on of hands, offered her kisses more beneficently, received his own more gladly, was less on her guard, more her natural, warm-hearted self; and that even with the glum Charles she was on better terms. She rallied Charles; she quizzed him; she made him talk, was less on edge with his punctilio, took him and his troubles far less tragically. When he was not abroad, he dined with the pair at least twice a week. Her new gayety, her new freedom were noticeable. You would have said that Charles himself must have remarked them. At this rate, said the Duke to himself, we shall have her bursting her bodices. All seemed pure gain to this singular statesman.

As for Georgiana herself, she floated betwixt earth and heaven, in a state so woven of light and music that the acts of benevolence she did to those about her were little more to her, doing them, than assurances that she still waked and lived among men. She touched men, as it were, to be safe, and sure of safety, as children touch wood in the garden game. But a great elation was upon her, a universal charity. This latest assumption she had suffered was of a divinity. She looked down from her skyey throne benevolently upon all the groping world, and to give every denizen what he desired seemed to her not only charitable but reasonable, and only dangerous because so frankly selfish on her part. It hurt her, when she thought of it, to realize that everybody was not as happy as she. Danger to her from humored men! How could there be danger to a woman marked by Gervase for his own by kisses?

It was not that she was merely loved. She had been loved before, and was loved now, by two men. It was not that she loved and could lavish her treasure. It was that, loving, she was beloved by him whom she adored. That uplifted her, that mutuality. There was confidence as well as partnership. From the first moment of surrender she had been sure of herself; but when he came to seek her in the ballroom she had been sure of him.

Remembered joy, Nausithoë! Score it up against the lean years.

Her kindness to Charles, as good as a comedy to the Duke, watching it and chuckling, sprang not only from that benevolence which her own well-being excited in her; it was prompted also by the feeling of safety. She had given her heart to Gervase, and had no thought what was done with the rest of her. Charles might have demanded what he would of her, and have had it, too, without any harm done that she could have seen. So she was kind to him, and even cruelly kind; she drew him out, poked fun at him, took his arm sometimes, let her hand stay upon his shoulder, flattered the poor man, for moments, out of his depression. Only for moments, of course; for Charles was that sort of man who could not be happy in Naples, because he had not been to Rome. The bitter seed remained in his cup that so many years had passed when she had not been so kind to him as she was now, and that the years when she had been kinder had gone forever. But for her, at least, it was a great thing. She was no longer afraid to be with him in the evenings; in fact she welcomed the rare event because she could talk to him about Gervase with perfect comfort. He had no jealousy of Gervase; she had found that out. All his suspicions were of the Duke.

He read "Nausithoë," and they discussed it. Charles considered poetry as an elegant trifling. Gervase's future was a frequent topic. Charles considered that his opinions would be a fatal bar to his advancement by the road of politics. He knew nothing of any

other road. He asked once, could not Georgiana employ him' as secretary? She allowed herself to bathe in the golden thought, lay, as it were, and let it sleep into her—but laughingly excused herself.

Once or twice, perhaps, she had the poet to dinner when Charles was there; but the dinners were not successful. Gervase was so bored by the good man that he became alarmed for his own state of mind. He found himself shivering like a man in a fever. He did not mean to be rude—naturally, he was blunt but not discourteous; but Charles had the effect upon him of stirring him to impotent rage. He wanted to break up Charles; he was consumed with the desire to cut him somewhere and discover real blood; to shock him into a human cry; to take him unawares and find a man under the smooth vellum. Charles, he said, made him feel like the Tempter of our Lord. He would have flown with him to the Cross of St. Paul's, to show him the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, but that he would most certainly have thrown him over the parapet, to be satisfied by that violent proof that this being, who did not seem to live, could die. After dinner, when his host had gone to the House of Commons, Gervase would stalk the drawing-room and rave. Charles' urbane, constant, monumental dullness made him incoherent. He denied him virtue, unless a jellyfish had virtue; he denied him attributes. He could only be judged by the absence of attributes. He was the Everlasting Nay; he was like the Mosaic Commandments, which told you what you should not do, but gave no hint of what you should.

When the Duke was present things went much better. Gervase disapproved of the Duke, but respected his strong mediocrity. The Duke was common sense incarnate: by that nothing whatever could be *done*, but all could be maintained. The Duke was the journeyman of the state, who kept the parts oiled, and had the grace of being able to laugh at the work he did without ceasing to do it. And an autocrat, he said, was ten thousand times better than an official. An official goes by rules which cannot fit any case at all, since every case varies from every other case. A despot goes by will, which can be modified by other wills, and swayed by living considerations. He and the Duke, in fact, amused each other. His handling of Reform—that burning topic—as a thing too obvious to be worth discussion was a continued delight to Reform's stout opponent. To Charles it was extremely offensive. "Get it, get it, by all manner of means," the Duke used to say; "raise the country, and you'll have it. But, if you break the law, I shall put you in jail." "Your Grace talks of the law of England as if it was the Law of God." "So it is, young man, while the King lives and reigns." "The Lord's Anointed!" cried Gervase in a fume. "The Lord's Anointed?" said the Duke with plain gravity. What are you to do with a man who says plumply that he believes the King to be the Lord's Anointed? In its way that is a sublime belief. So is that which says that the earth is flat. Gervase was not at all intolerant of opinion. What he abominated was the absence of opinion.

But he would take nothing of the Duke in the way of hospitality or bounty. He would dine in his company, at Georgiana's table, but not at his own. And he would take no office at his hands.

Meanwhile, during one golden, perfect month reigned the summer of Mrs. Lancelot's life. The halcyon time, they called it afterward, from a poem of Gervase's which described her coming out to him in the early morning, in her close blue gown:

When like a halcyon in his bronze of blue
Forthward she flashed—

it begins—and has her fast. Reading herself in this and other of his pieces was like looking at herself in a magic glass and seeing all her familiar features enhanced and burning bright. Was this the face? Was this lovely and glorious image Geogiana Lancelot's? She might have fallen in love with herself, urged by him to the state of Narcissus; but she knew that he was deceived, and loved him the more for it. O Gervase, O fierce lover, O poet, was it possible that he had loved her so long, and she had never known it? What glory for her, what constancy in him!

She took a pride in herself which she had never had before. Her dress, her ornaments, the manner of her hair became a delight. Admiration in the world was so much tribute to the discernment of Gervase, who had seen her fair and sung her divine long before the world had known her so. This was very unjust to the Duke of Devizes, to say nothing of Charles; but she could not give by halves to one who gave her all. She not only tended her person; she was concerned for her mind, too. She read in all her spare hours, and followed breathlessly in his meteor wake. The time they actually spent together was almost nothing by the clock; but they wasted none of it. From the moment when she fell into his arms the assumption, the chief of many, was made. She believed everything, took everything for granted, and so did he. Their confidences were as complete as their confidence. He had nothing to conceal, and she concealed nothing—even of that which she should. But it was a test of loyalty, and an enormous comfort. He hated to be told of her wooing and marrying; but he must have it all. She told him of the death of her baby, not accusing Charles. That he did for himself; he accused him bitterly. It added vitriol to his scorn of the man with which one day to bite him. By the clock they met perhaps for three hours a week; every two days he wrote to her or sent her a poem. But full possession lasted from sight to sight. There was not a moment of the day when she was not filled with the sense of Gervase; not a moment when, in the midst of some crowded assembly, she could not shut her eyes and see him—see him, hear his voice, feel his kisses. She triumphed in her penury which gave her such strength as this. Positively she believed herself more certain of him when he was not with her than when he was.

For Gervase, of course, was an exorbitant lover. Entirely careless of the world's opinion, he was as delicate as a weathercock to the lightest flicker in the breath of hers. His claim upon her—once she had owned to her love—was limitless. He arrogated every right—and she felt that, and dreaded the hour when he should become explicit. She understood that what would satisfy her would not him. That was the swinging sword overhead which made her joy so fearful and so intense. It made her eyes wistful, and her mouth avid for the kisses of his mouth, lest the day should come soon when she would have to decide whether she could have them or not. She was conscious, therefore, of a feverishness in their intercourse, which he took from her, without realizing what it meant.

But he had his better times, when he was, surely, the most delightful companion in the world. He had a strong sense of humor, and colored with it everything he touched. His eye for likenesses was extraordinary. Men strutted and peered in birds; birds flapped along the pavements like men. He made up stories as they walked of all the people they met—romances in which crossing sweepers and orange women, whiskered footmen and stout

clergymen, and nursemaids, potboys, dandies, and deuce-knows-who were the victims of avengers of terrific love affairs. He was as quick to tears as to laughter, a fiery enthusiast for beauty, courage, swiftness, truth, and simplicity. He was without any sort of self-consciousness—careless in his dress and in what he did. But he never did anything of which an honest man might be ashamed, and did the business in hand with such perfect sincerity that there could be no sting in it due from any one with the power to wound him.

Two things in the world he hated: dullness and affectation. All other things he was ready to love; but next to women he thought trees the most glorious work of the Creator, and was sure that they had souls. He went out with Georgiana once to see a review of troops in Hyde Park and looked at the trees the whole time. He would talk of nothing else. The splendid immobility of them, their plain kinship with what is permanent, essential and abiding in the universe, showed men, he said, like lice. From this ruling he excepted women, however, who to him were not human. But here, as elsewhere, it was impossible to know whether he was serious or not; for he had a way of stating his most preposterous inventions in a plain voice, as when he alleged that the Archbishop of York had silver soles to his feet owing to an accident at birth, and that Lord J———y drove out daily in his curricle accompanied by eagles as supporters. There's no doubt he believed these fables at the time. On the other hand, he flamed forth as the paradoxes of an Irish orator some of his dearest convictions. It was good to hear him upon Reform with the Duke—good for all but Charles, who regarded the *status quo* as of high moral value and not as a convenience to business.

But, after all, he had come into the world to be a poet, and such he was from the tissues. He breathed poetry, thought in its terms, lived and loved in and by it. Ideas were things to him, and things had appearance because they were ideas. This put him counter to the rest of the world, in the which opposition even Georgiana found herself more than once. Even when he clasped her, kissed her, adored her, she felt that what he so loved might quite easily have been a tree or a sunlit cloud. He admitted that in quieter moments, and added that she might equally well have been Goodness, Temperance, Justice, or Fortitude; for such were real to him because they could be expressed in beauty. There threatened—and she felt it—a time when the discrepancy between what he thought her and what she knew that she was must yawn and sever them; but he said No to that. Before ever that gulf could be reached she would be his, one with him, in flesh as well as in spirit. Not yet, at his fiercest, had he urged that completion of their love; but every stave of the poem which composed their intercourse implied that, and her courage fainted when she thought of the time when this forking of ways must be met.

For the one vital difference between their natures was this, that Gervase believed passion to be a divine urgency, and she that it might well be of the devil.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WOUNDS IN THE OPEN.

This halcyon time ended perforce with the days of parliament. The prorogation came in the third week of August, and then the great world flitted, leaving London empty, and Gervase in it, gnashing his teeth.

The Lancelots were going first to Thorntree, later to join the Duke in a round of visits. Gervase now had actually to face separation from his mistress. An open invitation from the

Duke was at his service, but he would not have it.

He met her the night before her departure, and faced it in his worst mood.

"This is horrible," he said, having her in his arms; and his words in contrast with his embrace seemed to her most dreadful. "For a silly custom you suffer me to be divorced. We belong to each other by the most sacred of ties. What! After what has passed between us—vows of the lips, oaths of the eyes, chrism of the heart—you think we are not one! But we *are* one—nothing ought to separate us. And you go from me with one man, and then court the company of another—and I, your true husband, am left here. Oh, my adored, it is monstrous—monstrous! But you submit—it is that which kills me—you submit to a servitude. You don't rebel; you don't even desire to rebel. You fold your hands, bow your head, and this foul machine—Juggernaut brown with old blood, and slippery with new—drives over you. You lift up your eyes, you sigh, 'Blessed be the Lord our God!' and the wheels crush your bright body into the dust! Death and Despair!"

She soothed him with voice and hand; she anointed him with her eyes, with her lips; she reasoned with him—but he would hardly listen.

"No, no," he said. "You have given me your heart, and thereby I have all—I have all. Those others have no rights. If you were to say to Lancelot, 'I cannot come with you. I have affairs in town,' what could he say? What could he do?"

"Dearest," she said, smiling sadly enough, "he could ask, 'What are your affairs?'"

"Then," said he, "you could tell him what they were. I will tell him myself, if you like. It is time."

What was there to say but "Dearest!" What to do but to kiss the preposterous creature?

He arrogated to himself absolute disposal of her heart, time, and person. He set no bounds to the charter which, as he said, she had sealed on his lips with hers. The heart had spoken. What did that involve? What inference must be drawn? Why, every consequence—every inference. All was his, that being his. How could the body do, without sin, that which the heart would not? He raised his hand to heaven above her head. "By all honor, all truth, all reason, all justice, you are mine. And they tear us apart—you and me! Let God hear me—this is iniquity."

He would have carried her off then and there—he made it a grievance that she gently denied him. Yet, probably, if she had consented, he would have denied himself. Such was Gervase, a true poet, and a preposterous young man.

He seemed to draw her soul shuddering out from her lips, he strained her to him until she gasped with pain—but he went out in a tempest of resentment—gave her a dreadful night, and himself one of delirium—and next morning she received six sheets—there was no reason why they should not have been twelve—full of contrition, vows, promises of amendment. With that in her bosom she set out for Gloucestershire.

He wrote to her every day—his letters franked, absurdly enough, with the flowing script and style "Devizes." With no less incongruity—with more, perhaps, and she felt it—her replies bore the name "Charles Lancelot."

Every letter he sent her was in truth a poem, written with his heart's blood. She felt a dreadful reality beneath the impossible ascriptions he gave her, and a dreadful certainty that life and death were now involved in their common business. So real was the strange world, in the which every word he wrote dipped her the deeper, that the life of her old home—her father's county

duties, her mother's airs of county lady, Diana's flirtations, and Augusta's nursery—seemed like comic opera. She sat, a bored or scared spectator, absorbed in her own tragic affair; she spoke at random, loved to be by herself. The daily post was her bidding bell, which summoned her one more stage upon the fateful journey she was going.

Gervase was an inexorable lover. There was no escape from him. He waxed under the ardor of his own mood, as if warming himself at his own fire, until his whole being was incandescent. His words seemed to have dripped hissing to the paper, to have burned themselves there. She could almost read them through their cover, and wondered sometimes how the wax could hold them, and not melt. She could not by any means cope with them—though they affected her dreadfully. She used to sit trembling with them in her lap, pale and trembling; then with a long sigh she would go about her duties such as they were, and when she was recovered would write a guarded reply. If she had answered, as he writ, in the heat, God knows what she might not have said. She had not tongues naturally, and all her instinct was toward compromise. Alas, her temperance was a stumbling block to him. The tide of his passion boiled and swirled round against it; rose, topped it, carried it away and rushed forward, heaving to the sea—a sea to which it was carrying her, too. And, half fainting, she knew it and, half fainting, was glad and unutterably happy. But the night, the desperate, inexorable, leaden-footed night brought her, at least, counsel, if not sleep—and she began the battle again.

For she was absolutely clear in her own mind of two things—that she loved him entirely, and that she must not yield. It was impossible to her to deny either proposition. They were self-evident. It is a marvel that one at least of them was not evident to all the world. But so far, only one person knew it, and he was at Marston Mortimer entertaining a Royal Duke, whom Georgiana had excused herself from meeting, on grounds too plain to be refused; and one person suspected—Gussy, her younger sister. The loyal, unhappy, frost-bitten Charles knew nothing. All his jealous eyes were for another, who, fine man, was perfectly negligible. He should have turned on the Duke hopeful eyes, if he had known the truth—all his hopes were really there.

So August wore through, and in September the Lancelots left Thorntree and proceeded to pay visits, mapping out a progress which should take them through the West into Sussex, where the Duke expected them.

Letters pursued her wherever she went, and had to be answered. Charles' ducal bag saved her from many prying eyes—and Charles himself never dreamed of looking at her correspondence. Such a deed would have been impossible to him—not from any clear motive of honor, but because the act of prying would have admitted to himself that he was jealous; and his self-esteem could not have supported such an avowal. Queer are the motives which prompt the actions of us men!

But, in the pressure of her private cares, poor Charles could make no headway. His complete ignorance of them gave him an insignificance in her eyes which was actually offensive. He belittled himself; she felt sometimes as if she were dragging him after her like a bramble at her skirt; at other times, under Gervase's spell, as if it were he who dragged, and she who felt the scorch of the fetter. He was a continual reminder to her of irksome duty; she could hardly bring herself to be civil to him, so much he fretted her nerves. Luckily for her, every house she went to was full of company. She plunged

into the fussy trivialities of the life, chattered, laughed, listened to bores. By such means, for moments at a time, she drowned in shrill noise the wailing in her heart. If Gervase could have seen her, flushed, glittering thing that she was, he would have denied her a heart at all.

Lady B——'s party, which a diarist, already quoted, has hit off for us, was the last she joined before going to Marston. There she met the Duke, and with him was to go on to his house. She was the most courted, but the most elusive guest; for the Duke and politics claimed her. Politics were gathering to a head. February, it was supposed, or May at latest, would see the Reform Bill before the Lords—and what was the party to do? It was no secret that the King wanted the Ministry out. He had quarreled with nearly every member of it, and was beginning to distrust the Duke. Correspondence flowed upon him. The library tables brimmed with it, and from Windsor every day came a note by a special messenger, requiring some sort of answer. Charles was in high fettle. He loved such detail, and could forget his troubles in it. Georgiana found it very difficult to be interested, and the Duke was unaffectedly bored. He had been overjoyed to see her again—had ridden out half a dozen miles to meet her. He had her to himself both before and after dinner; scolded her for her thinness, for her pale cheeks—met pleasantly, not seriously, and did not press for explanations. He asked after "her poet," was told that she "heard from him," nodded and pretended that nothing was happening.

But much was happening; in fact, the outrageous young man, after a day or two of silence, came to Bagington, hovered on the outskirts—the thickets of the part and what not—and presently contrived to make his presence known to Georgiana. Between joy at his nearness, terror at his daring, and fear of eyes the poor lady nearly succumbed.

The note was brought to her by her maid when she was dressing. An hour was named—"to-morrow at eleven"—by a certain great tree in the park. It might as well have been on the lawn before the morning-room windows. She—in desperation—she was like a trapped mouse—burned it and made no reply. The morrow must provide for the things of itself. She had too much on her hands for this night—a great dinner in a house full of people.

The diarist remarked her pallor, and remarked upon it to her husband. "Lancelot, your wife works too hard. She looks as if she saw ghosts." Nausithoë's fate leaped into Charles' mind; he made formal answer.

The racket of the interminable evening passed over. Talk, and the fictitious interest which is necessary to it, and can be feigned, filled it. You have to be a very great man indeed to be able to be silent at such a party. Such was the Duke. He stood, most of the time after dinner, stiff, looking straight before him, but Georgiana, whom he honestly loved, was always within his field of vision. He knew that she was disturbed, though so great was her self-command that nobody else knew it at all.

Her agitation was due to the knowledge of Gervase so near her, and yet so entirely out of her reach. Her eyes, wondering, vaguely searching, sometimes fixed themselves upon the windows, rested there, straining, staring, as if to see through them, through the dark, through the mist. She felt certain that he was there. This made her shiver, left her trembling.

She went to bed, but did not dare look out into the night. She had a feeling that he would call her. And if he did, she knew that she would go.

And how she longed to go, ached to go, she dared not reveal to herself.

A hasty two words passed with the Duke at candle-lighting time: "Georgie, you are upset. What's the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing! I'm tired, I think. There's so much talking. We are always talking, aren't we? Isn't it extraordinary?"

"I don't talk. I watch—you."

She was petulant. "Please don't do that. I feel it sometimes. It troubles me. You seldom do that."

"You shall be obeyed. But I know that something is going on—which you don't like."

She made no answer. All he could add was: "If I can be of use to you—in anything—don't fail to let me know. To fail in that would be failing me indeed."

She succeeded in looking at him. "No," she said, "I won't fail you, Duke." He kissed her hand and left her. She shrouded herself in the dark, and lay half the night listening, trembling, glowing at the thought that he was there, that she should see him tomorrow.

In spite of the suffering he had caused her, the actual sight of her lover assured him a smooth face and a bright-eyed welcome. There was added, to enhance the effect, real admiration of his daring. Gervase was certainly incalculable, splendidly out of the ruck of men. She came to him, then, rosy, sparkling, with welcoming warm lips. "Oh, my dearest, how wicked of you!" But how she loved him for his wickedness! "How could you do it?" Why, what else could he have done? "Indeed, I love you beyond words—but you terrify me."

His first answer was to enfold her in his arms; his next to be the most reasonable man alive.

"It would have been impossible—feeling as I do—to have kept away from you any longer. There is a breaking-point to every strain. Letters! How can they express you? Or poetry? How can you write poetry in the midst of stress? The stress must have passed; the mood must be tranquil. I haven't composed a line since I left you six weeks ago."

She flashed him a radiant look. "No poems! And your letters!"

He ignored these burning odes. "I had to write, for mere life. But enough. That is over now that I have you. Don't ask me how I have lived—or where. I don't know. For that matter, twopence a week or whatever it may be gives you a narrow range. I believe I am in debt to my landlady. I'm not certain. She will tell you. Oh, I suppose I have been nourished, as far as that goes. Bread is not dear just now. But the bread of the soul is dear, my angel—I am starving in the soul. It's not reasonable to ask me to live like this. It's bad for me, and bad for you."

She clung to him, nestled in his arms. All her own troubles were put away, to succor him in his. Far more real as they were, she ignored them. "My dear one, my dear one, I know how dreadful it must be for you. But what can I do? I would give the world up to make you happy."

"It would make *you* happy, my angel, or I know nothing of women—least of all women, of you. Ah, what a life we could make it, you and I! What a life!"

She quivered—she could not trust her voice. For her powers of vivid dreaming were as great as his, though he had expression and she none.

He went on: "I see it, I see it all. You and I, wholly one, as we are now in part—in this maimed life, in rat-traps. You in a trap—I in a trap—running round and round—'I can't get out! I can't get out!' Oh, horrible slavery! And what adds mockery to horror is that we *can* get out." He strained her in his arms. "My adored one, we can get out immediately. We

can get out at this moment. Oh, you must see it. Tell me—shall it be?"

She faltered, stared. Her lips parted, the lower lip fell. "Oh, Gervase, what do you mean?"

His words scorched her. "Fly, fly, fly—fly with me! We will go now—and forever. You shall leave these hard, bitter men—these glittering sepulchers of lies and vanity and sham. You shall come with me to Italy, my soul—you and I will be the only real persons in the whole world—live life to the full—the mind, the heart, the soul, the body, all intensely alive—quivering with life and light. Come, my beloved, come—this moment—come."

She was dreadfully frightened: her eyes were enormous, her mouth all drawn together to a mere bud. "Oh, my dearest, I couldn't do that. Don't ask me that. Oh, no, no, no!"

He pressed her the closer, storming down her refusals. "But I do, I do, because I must."

She shut her eyes; she turned ashy white. This was the hour of fate. She had no strength to speak, but her lips framed the "No, no," unmistakably.

"You cannot? You refuse? I am to go?"

Desperate, poor soul, she nodded her head. He released her. He was as hard as iron, and as cold.

"Then the thing is over. I go. You have the right—you are to choose. For all that you have given me, I bless your name. For all that you are and must be—I give thanks to God."

He turned and left her. She was deadly calm—white and fixed. Her eyes burned black, her lips were close, and colorless. With him, it seemed, went all that warmth which could give her color. He might have drained all her blood out and taken it with him in a bottle. She did not move, could not speak; but she looked after him so long as she could see anything—then began to rock to and fro. She put out her hands to steady herself, to balance on them as a bird on his wings, or a rope-dancer on his bending pole. Then she came to herself, saw her desolation, threw her arm against the tree for support, and, leaning her face into the crook of it, sobbed convulsively, and broke down. There she remained until she felt a hand upon her shoulder, and heard the Duke's voice.

He had been riding in the park, with only a groom. He had ordered it to be so. Cantering easily over the turf, his eye had caught sight of a tall man in black striding bareheaded toward the carriage drive and lodge gate. "Oho!" He swept the horizon, with eyes like a wind-hover's. Then he turned to his groom. "I shall get off, and walk up to the house. Take my horse, and go straight to the stables." He dismounted and led his horse to the man, put the reins in his hand. "That's your way," he told him, and pointed it out. It led him to the drive, well above the point where Gervase could cut into it on his tangent, directly away from where he saw the weeping Georgiana.

The man obeyed him and trotted off with the pair of animals. The Duke walked briskly over the grass.

Georgiana at his "My poor child, why didn't you tell me of your troubles? Come and cry on my shoulder"—obeyed him. He soothed her as a mother would a child unhappy.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LOCAL REMEDY.

She took his arm, the drooping child that she seemed, beaten almost to a shade, and was grateful to him for his silence. He said nothing at all, but patted her hand from time to time, and when she was recovered, devoted himself to her for the rest of the way with a simplicity which was highly honorable to him. He told her stories,

cracked jokes, rallied her—got her into a more rational mood.

Charles had seen them coming from the library windows. There he sat with his dispatch boxes and secretaries, immersed in business, but with his brain on fire. He was suffering damnable things. His pale face and hollow cheeks, his lantern jaws and great, burning black eyes showed it. But he possessed infinite capacities of endurance, it seemed. And so, sighing, he compressed his lips and turned to his business. When the Duke came into the room he was received with his junior's usual urbane deference.

Lancelot was in this extraordinary position that, really loving his wife, and desperately jealous of the Duke's position with regard to her, he was incapable of hating the Duke. He admired his parts and respected them, he adored his greatness as much as ever he had, and saw no career so attractive as that of being at his right hand, and, if need were, of falling by his side in the Armageddon to come. For Charles believed, as the Duke certainly did, that the struggle for Reform meant death to the old order in England, and that the aristocracy must die in their ranks, even as the French nobility had done in the Terror.

But there was another side to Charles. He was a morbid man, a sensitive man, but a just one. He could not deny to himself that he had desired this friendship, and had done his best to procure it—for his own ends. He had hoped that Georgiana would attract the Duke, had invited it. Now that it was done, how could he, in common justice, blame her or her lover? He knew that he could not. Lover as he was, he must go on loving, and see his beloved give herself to his patron. He could be nothing but agonized—but he could not cease loving either of the guilty ones.

For guilty they must be. For what other conceivable reason had she separated herself? For what other reason had they gone into Wake House? There could be none. He had been betrayed by the two persons whom he loved best in the world—and yet he went on loving them both. Was ever such a position held by a man of honor before?

He was a man of honor. He would have died sooner than injure his wife, and would spend his last ounce of blood in the Duke's service. Really, though he was in torment, he admitted the Duke's right—as that of a Lord of the Earth, as that of a being superior to the ties and liens of human kind—to take what naturally fell to him. Had it been his own right hand, he would have given it. It was his heart which his master now required—and he must have it. A loyaler soul than Lancelot's did not exist in this world.

He viewed his own act now—not as inconceivable folly, not as a thing to be ashamed of—as a sacrifice to this loyal admiration for a great man. He had offered up his ewe lamb to his master's needs—and that his master had benefited by it was a kind of consolation. So it might console a victim, like Iphigenia, that by her blood a fate was averted, and in her dying eyes you might have seen a faint spark of thanksgiving.

The Duke came into the room in his usual brisk and cool manner. "Georgie's overdone," he said. "I found her in the park. There's nothing much amiss; but I have persuaded her to lie down. You'd better go up to her presently—but don't ask questions. Don't bother her. She's been strained, I think, with all this fuss."

Charles had started up. "If you will excuse me, I'll go to her now."

"As you please. She'll hardly have had time to compose herself. But as you please."

Charles bent again to his work. "I

have put aside these letters for you to see. There seems some doubt as to whether we can count upon Lords Cantacute and Milsom. Milsom wishes to make his undertaking conditional—as you'll see."

"D—n him, does he though?" said the Duke, and sat to his letters.

He read, pished, pshawed, dictated half a dozen short replies to half a dozen inordinately long communications, then said: "Charles, go up to her. Treat her kindly—but I've no business to say that. You always do. I needn't tell you what I think of her." He looked up suddenly. "God bless you, Charles," and held out his hand.

Charles Lancelot took a short breath —struggled as if on the point of speaking, but resigned the effort. He grasped the Duke's hand and left the room.

He sped upstairs and knocked at his wife's door. The blinds were down, but he made out her slim figure crouched on the bed. He came to her on tiptoe, stooped over her, and touched her hair with his hand. "My love, I am distressed——" he began, but she stopped him.

"Don't be unhappy," she said. "I shall be better directly. I have a bad headache. The sun was very hot this morning. I think it struck me. The Duke was very kind." Then she put out her hand. "And so are you. You always are." That was literally what the Duke had said. It stabbed him.

But he took and held her hand; he could hardly see her through his misty eyes. All his soul strained toward her. Then suddenly he knelt by the bed and kissed her hand. "I am ever yours, my dearest—ever, ever yours." She heard him, she understood him in part, but his words had no conviction for her.

"Oh, you are very good to me!" she said. "Perhaps I can go to sleep. I don't know. You won't be surprised if I don't come down to luncheon, will you? Make my apologies, and tell them I don't want anything."

Charles was now on his feet. His emotion was under cover again. "Certainly, my love. I'll call again later in the day. I do trust that you will sleep."

"I don't know that I can. I hope I can." She looked up at him. "Thank you for coming to me," she said, and nearly undid him. He choked his sob —strangled it at birth, then stooped over and kissed her forehead. She knew a sudden change of mood, or read in him something which she had never read before. She looked up sideways at him, then turned about and put her arm round his neck. She felt him shiver. For a moment she clung to him like a frightened child. If he had stayed with her all might yet have been well with him; but the poor fool did not know that. His habit of repressing himself crept over him again. "I pray that you may sleep," was what he said, and then he left her.

When he was gone she lay wide awake in a reverie that was not disagreeable, because it was perfectly vague. A faint aroma of tenderness seemed to float over her. Gervase and his wild love-making were far from her. She seemed hardly to miss him. Charles had loved her—Charles had been kind to her again! Perhaps she had just begun to learn Charles—all the implications of his severe conduct were to be discovered. Could that be true? Did Charles love her?

It was very odd that Gervase was so little in her thoughts. She whipped her mind back to the park—to the trees and the burned white acres of grass, to the buzzing of insects and the puffs of hot wind. Then she saw him again with his fierce, inspired face—his tragic mask and gray eyes which seemed to flame. She felt his arms, his breath, his kisses. Her brain swam, the room spun round. At the back of her mind she heard, like

a bell on a rock at sea, the Everlasting Nay. "Lawlessness is not for thee—no more of that. Seek thy happiness in the Mean. Husband and child, husband and child. Seek them, seek them, seek them."

As one navigating swift rivers of water between shoals, she listened to that warning bell, and took comfort in it. Charles gained. With the strong sounds in her ear she fell asleep.

Downstairs Charles was with the Duke. Their positions were strangely reversed. Charles, who should have been accuser, was accusing himself. The Duke, who should have been defendant, was judge and jury. The Duke sat upright at the table, drumming his fingers lightly. Charles, with bent head and hands locked closely behind him, walked the floor.

He had begun by formal excuses of his impertinence. "I feel that I abuse your friendship, if I may call it that, by intruding my personal affairs upon you. Believe me, nothing but their pressure could persuade me——"

"Go on, Charles." That, according to the Duke, should be sufficient encouragement to any man born. But it was not enough for Charles.

"It is very difficult, you know. I may seem to be criticizing one whom it would be presumptuous in me——"

"Do you mean me, pray? My dear friend, you may say what you please of me. But I thought you were going to talk about your wife."

"I confess to that. I am disturbed about her, and have been for some time. Probably you know that I have lost her confidence—I don't know whether she may have told you——"

The Duke blinked. "She never speaks of you to me; but I have eyes in my head."

"She has been unlike herself of late. She has had alternating moods, now up, now down. But I have not felt able to invite that which there has been no disposition to concede. I am venturing to appeal, therefore, to you. It is humiliating, you must allow; but I feel that I ought to be humiliated——"

"Pish!" said the Duke. "That's a d—d foolish sort of feeling for any man to have. Let me get to the bottom of this. You think that Georgie's in love with me, I take it. Well, I can settle that for you in two words. She is not. I know that by the best evidence in the world."

Charles dropped his lower jaw, and seemed unable to pick it up again. He looked grotesquely helpless.

"Let me tell you this, my friend," the Duke went on, and in such a way that he seemed to be accusing his accuser when he ought to have been defending himself, "I have been head over heels in love with her ever since I saw her. Make no mistake about that. I am still, and expect I always shall be. She's very fond of me—she admits that; but for all the good she can do to my complaint I might be her grandfather. Now, I'll tell you this. I have made love to her in my day, as I have to other women. But she's not like other women. She put me in my place. She wouldn't have anything to say to me. She did it, upon my soul, in the neatest way I ever heard tell of. It was a great scene. Without a word of indignation, without a lot of talk about virtue—which they never mean—without a tear, or a flashing eye, or a colored cheek, she did it. And I let her be. She beat me hollow. And the moment she'd done it she jumped up with her arms about my neck and gave me a kiss. God bless her; she's all gold. And I've never made love to her from that day to this. And that was two years ago. Now, I'll tell you another thing, my young friend."

He had just lifted his admonishing forefinger, when Charles lifted his bruised head.

"One moment, please. You have told me what I had imagined. I have never doubted my wife's honor. You have confirmed my beliefs—and I am deeply obliged to you. But I must make my confession. I earnestly desired her acquaintance with you—I sought to begin it, I cherished its beginnings—for my own advantage. I admonished her—God forgive me—to make the most of it. I——"

"You might have spared yourself the trouble, my dear Charles," said the Duke. "She had me in a net the very first time I saw her—the little witch-wife that she is. So you made her a lure? To catch me? My dear Charles, I'm very glad you succeeded. I'm very much obliged to you. She's been an enormous happiness to me—and you're the best *aide* I ever had. I'll add this. If you made her a friend of me—she made me a friend of yours. I ask no better."

Charles was much moved. "I cannot sufficiently thank you, Duke."

"Don't thank me, my friend," he was told. "You've only yourself to thank. Do you take me for a fool? Do you suppose that I should have employed you because I loved your wife? You never made a greater mistake than that—if so it be. Why, man, do me justice for common sense. I've got the business of this d—d blundering old country to do. I can't afford jobs on a pretty woman's account. No, no. Leave all that to the Duke of York. You might as well ask me to say that you threw your wife at my head for the sake of twelve hundred pounds a year."

"As God lives," said Charles, "that is untrue. It has been the aim of my life to serve under you."

"I think that very true. You're a gentleman, Charles, though you're not much of a hand with women. Now let me tell you something. If you don't make love to your wife, somebody else will, so sure as you were born. That's common reason. But I'll add to that, that it won't be me. No, no. She won't have me." He rose. "I tell you that I'm in love with her. She's an angel. By nature she's as bright as the sun on a fine May morning; and she's as good for a man as that, every bit. She's too good for me, I know—and she's probably too good for you. But she'll follow the law, you'll find. You trust her, and so do I. But it's common justice that we should make her happy between us—the barest justice. We owe her that. Damme, sir, if two men can't make a woman happy between 'em, they ought to be sent to jail!"

Charles turned away his face; but the Duke did not misinterpret the action. He went on.

"She's young, and full of health, and great-spirited, and full of pretty thoughts and fancies which we can only guess at—grope after. Give her her fling, my dear fellow. She'll come back. Trust her, enjoy the sight of her, laugh with her—revel in her grace. By God, I've had to teach myself that. And I've done it! I wish her happy—and happy she shall be, for me, though she run away with the first tinker's brat who makes eyes at her. Bless you, she won't do it. She'll think of it—put her pretty head sideways—show the mischief spark in her eye—but she'll stick to you and the law. You trust her. And for God's sake, no sour looks. Be ready for her when she comes. Damn it, Charles, she's worth it. I can do it—so can you. Let's be decent men about all this. I'll tell you this. There could be no better news for me than that you and she were together again."

He was a blunt man, this Duke of Devizes, and captain of old England—an England that died with him. He went farther than I do in his particulars. But Charles wrung his offered hand, and then, by some innate feeling of respect for what was respectable—kissed it. The Duke disliked that.

"Now let's get to work with these damned letters," he said. He always swore when he was moved—like a partridge on the defense, kicking up dust.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DUKE AT THE HELM.

When Georgiana returned to town, whither she went directly from the B——s', she found a canto of apologetics from Gervase, and within two hours of her arrival had him weeping on his knees, with his face upon hers. This young man was always *in extremis* —extreme of daring, extreme of self-humiliation, extreme of bliss or extreme of misery: you could never get him to perch amidships. He did not ask her for forgiveness, he extenuated nothing, he held to all that he had said as the only possible course for true lovers; but he was aghast at his own induracy and at the accursed fate which drove him to cause her suffering, and while he bewailed all this, he foresaw that it was to continue. That was why he wept.

"Oh, my Saint, my Saint," he murmured between his sobs. "Oh, my Rose of Dawn! and this misery must go on. There's no remedy—we are stricken—wounded, we run about showing our wounds. We ask for pity, and get cold looks. We say to ourselves, 'Can it be that men, that women, fed on the same milk, crowned with the same hope, conscious of the same destiny, can see us bleed and have no compassion?' Alas, my beloved—and we are not allowed to die!" So he ran on, blowing into flame his own fire, and she sat with her hand in his hair, looking down upon him with divine gentleness, and a swelling heart, in the midst of which was a pain which seemed vocal, seemed to wail.

Her eyes were wide and had no tears. The case was beyond her tears; for she knew that he was right and that she could not help him. Nothing could be more certain to her than that she adored this fierce, hot-headed young man. She gloried in his genius, she took more pride in his discerning devotion than in all the tribute of the Duke's, in all the heady incense which floated up to her from that greatness on its knees. For she was able to discriminate. She knew very well that the Duke's greatness was not of the mind, and that the Duke's love for her did not proceed from the mind, was not of the soul at all. Gervase loved her body, she saw, because it informed her soul; Gervase desired it so ardently because by it alone he could unite his soul with hers. She and he were severed hemispheres. Yes, he was fatally right. There was no possible happiness—now—for them short of union. Hard-eyed, envisaging the dreary scene of their torment, she sat and watched him.

But Gervase must be nourished, and hope was his food. If she could give him none, he must forage for himself; and even as he lay his mind ranged abroad, casting about for shreds of comfort. Of the suddenest he lifted his head and gazing, smiling, into her woe-begone face, he put his hands upon her shoulders. "You and I, my saint, have at least this certainty, that we cannot face, or think of, separation. Tortured we must be, but together. Is it not so?"

She could not speak, or take her eyes from him; she nodded her head. He embroidered the theme. He drank thirstily the slightest motion of her head. "They can never keep us apart. I don't know that they will try. That is hopeless."

She shook her head, still looking at him. "No, no, not now. I should die. You are all to me." He adored her motions; his pity for her dreariness was a sort of rapture. Gazing each at the other, speechless, they thrilled as they neared; then their lips met and held together—and then the ice about her heart broke up, and she fell abandoned into

his arms and sobbed her heart out. Thus she awoke his manhood; he became the calm marshal of events, once more the arbiter of destiny. He sought not the impossible, resumed his old place of her sweet familiar, the one being on earth with whom she could be absolutely herself; and every sign that she gave him of her renewing ease was the call for one assurance the more that she might resume it.

Their leave-taking was prolonged and tender. He claimed nothing that she could not give him, and clasping her to his heart proclaimed himself aloud the blessed of God. "I have your heart, I have your heart and soul! What is it to me that your divine body is withheld for a season? Let Nature have her mighty way with us two. Good night, my sweet Queen, I go to write of you as a poet should." And so he left her —and so for many days, on every one of which they held this kind of intercourse, he met and parted from her. For Georgiana he was at his best in these chastened and serene moods wherein all that was fine in him, his imaginative chivalry, his humor, his unfailing tact and resource, had full scope. Tragic, fiercely animal, cold by reason of some secret wound, bitter, scoffing, arrogant, intolerant—she loved him in every guise, but never so much as when she could read the justification of her entire confidence in his friendly and affectionate eyes. He was writing of her freely, as he told her, at this time—and all was well with him for the moment. All went indifferent well, in fact, throughout the winter. There were few resumptions of that clamative, devouring mood of his, in which it seemed certain that he must eat her up—and such as there were, were momentary. No; he was writing, and all was well.

If all was well with him, it was well with her, and Charles got the benefit of that. Since her return to London she had been able to be charming to Charles. And he, too, though harassed by his work, was in a good mood. Knowing nothing of Gervase, having no eyes for him, he had been much comforted by the Duke's frankness. He was still jealous whenever he saw the pair together; but his imagination was quieted. He did not leave the house with dreadful suspicion; he did not return to it with a sinking heart. If he had had time to envisage deliberately the state of his own case he would have found it pretty desperate. Georgiana was too friendly by half—too cool in her friendliness. He had very little knowledge of women, but enough to see that if a woman can afford to be friendly with you it is because she knows that you can't expect anything else of her. But he was too busy to think of all this, and besides that, he was of a cold temperament and did not burn for the renewal of his rights. So long as his sense of property was not outraged by evidence, he did not need immediate possession.

And really he was very busy. Parliament had resumed in November, had adjourned for a few days at Christmas, had met again early in the New Year, and was hatching a yeasty kind of an egg, it seemed, which, if it should burst of its ferment, might well blow the Duke and his friends out of office. Which, in fact, it did in February. Beaten over and over again in the Commons, the night came when he had to walk out of his own house in the face of certain defeat. That was what he did, and faced a Westminster Yard hoarse with injuries, filled with white and mocking faces, bristling with uplifted, threatening fists. Stones were flying too, and the soldiery sent for. With Charles at his side, and a few more of his friends, the little great man stood coolly watching the stormy human sea.

He did not move a muscle of his face. His eyes were bright and un-

blinking. "By Gad, they don't love us just now. Time we were out of this," was what he said; and then, folding his cloak about him, he stepped coolly off the steps and made a way for himself. It was exactly as if a man dropped off a jetty into a swirling flood of water, to a certain death. Charles was behind him, undiguisedly anxious, not of the same heroic breed. It was not so much that he feared death, as that he cowered before hatred. Oddly enough, though he was the last man in the world to court popularity, that was in fact the very breath of his nostrils. To realize, as now he must, the loathing in which his king of men was held was terrible to him. "Down with the tyrant! Down with Privilege! To hell with the Duke!" Charles shuddered to hear. If he had had his wits about him, he would have taken comfort from the evident truth that fear was mingled with their hate. They saw that the man was beaten, but dreaded to gloat over that lest he should rise again on some third day. And positively, though they hovered about him, grinning their rage and desire, not a finger was laid upon him. They cursed him, they called for three groans, and one groan more; they reviled him with foul language and fouler implication. "Go to your women, you adulterer!" Charles heard with a mortal chill at the heart; and, "Into your seraglio, old Turk." The Duke was fabled to be of Turkish instincts—as indeed he was.

The little great man took it very coolly, and reached Wake House in capital spirits. "Well, Charles, that's all over. I must go to Windsor tomorrow or Friday. Plague take the rascal that he keeps his bed down there. Why the deuce can't he lie-in in town, like a gentleman? Now we must go and tell Georgie the news. We'll give her a holiday after this, Charles—by Gad we will. She's been out of sorts this long while." Then they went into the house, and sought Georgiana in her drawing-room.

She was out, however, at a party, and came in some half an hour later, fully acquainted with the news. She came in, with high color and bright eyes, and went straight up to the Duke. "Is all well? You are not hurt? Either of you?" This was well meant, but rather unfortunate. The fact was she had not identified Charles with the disaster. The poor wretch felt that.

The Duke took her hands and gave her a kiss on the forehead. "All well, Georgie. No bones broken—and no hearts, I hope. Charles was with me."

She turned immediately to her husband. "Wasn't it very alarming?"

He did his best. "No, my dear, no. The Duke was their master. It was extraordinary and very fine. Nobody knew me, I fancy."

She returned to the Duke. "Lord Alvanley came in and told me about it. I tried to get away, but they assured me that it wasn't safe. Luckily I had an escort."

The Duke blinked; the corners of his mouth twitched. He knew who this escort was—Charles neither knew nor cared.

They discussed the offshoots of the affair in the leisurely, detached manner of those who have their conduct in their own hands. The popular tumult was taken as a factor of the problem, but almost as a negligible one. The Duke had never got out of the way of considering men as so much stuff, to use or discard as the moment chose. To him the country meant the King, and government the King's pleasure or convenience. For one or both of these you might have to use the mob, either by drilling them in battalions or scattering them with the musketry of already formed battalions: beyond that he was unable to consider them seriously. They were ignorant, they were blackguardly, they were at the mercy of

demagogues whom he detested. He could not hate the mob, and scoffed at fear of it. Charles regarded the populace rather more closely. He considered it as the material of votes; and again he had the incurable belief of an official that it was a flock for his shepherding. Views, in a mob, were not to be thought of. His attitude was that of a clergyman who rises from his after-dinner port to minister at evening prayer, and to preach the virtues of strict temperance. In the present conjuncture, however, it was clear to both these politicians that resignation must follow. The Duke went by the temper of the House, meaning that of the Lords, Charles by the temper of the people as inflamed by the House of Commons. But Charles, the faithful shepherd, was troubled about the future, while the Duke looked only to the holiday ahead.

He broached it to his Egeria. "Italy, my dear, is the end of this. I think we'll give ourselves a trip. What do you say to Florence, Rome, back to Venice—across the Alps to Basle; home by the Rhine? Now don't you think that worth a little mob law?"

He was somewhat chilled to observe the frank dismay with which she received it. She stared, turned pale, faltered at the lips.

"Oh!" she said. "Oh, I had no idea! Really, I don't know whether—— But if you would like it, of course——" For the moment she had not been able to command herself, and when she could do it, and even feign enthusiasm jumping to meet his, it was too late. He had seen everything in a moment. Poor girl! She could not bear the thought of separation from her poet. The Duke was touched. It was pathetic—her dismay; but the summoning of her thin garrison at his command—to stand at attention, at the salute, late, faltering, shaking at the knees—that was a heart-rending spectacle.

He felt magnanimous; he beamed at her. "Yes, Georgie, we'll go," he said. "We'll make up a party of us. There'll be you, and me, and Charles. And how would it be to take Caroline Gunner—and your poet, eh?"

He saw the flood of color, he saw her eyes flutter and dilate. He saw her fight for breath, watching her bosom. He determined that it should be.

Charles inquired. "Who is your poet, my dear? Do I know him?" He knew him, of course, perfectly well—but Charles was Charles.

She was able to say: "Oh, yes, quite well. He calls Mr. Poore my poet. But I don't know whether Mr. Poore could—leave his work."

"He'll take it with him," said the Duke with a chuckle. "Reams of it."

Charles affected interest. "Does Mr. Poore follow the profession of poet? And does that advantage him in foreign travel?"

"It's his raw material," said the Duke. "'Childe Harold' should have taught you that much."

Charles objected. "Lord Byron was a man of means and abundant leisure, Duke. This gentleman may be both, no doubt, but in that case, probably, I should have heard of him."

"Oh, you'll hear of him one of these days," said the Duke. "Won't he, Georgie?"

Georgiana could now command herself. "I certainly think so myself, Mr. Poore has genius. It would be a great chance for him."

"Then by Gad he shall have his chance," said the Duke. "He shall come as my guest."

Georgiana turned away, and it was Charles who praised his Grace's generosity; but she felt it deeply, and knew that she would have an opportunity of repaying it as he would wish to be repaid. She had by this time found out in what queer channels his savor of her ran. But for the present she put out

of mind her duties of debtor to creditor —all her thoughts hummed and sang of the joy of telling her lover what was in store for them both. Italy and Gervase! Those two who should be inseparables, never yet united. And she would see Italy dawn in Gervase's eyes, and catch the first sound of his singing, when he, like a young Memnon, shrilled with that morning glory! And then she caught a sight of herself by prevision, hand in hand with him, straying through the breaking landscape, spying for the first flowers, kissing the golden buds. And then she felt herself in his eager arms, and grew hot, and had the mist upon her eyes. With those misty, happy eyes she thanked her great friend, urging her face toward him as she wished him good night. "Oh, you are kind to me," she whispered; and he smiled keenly at her, and would have kissed her, but that Charles was there. "Good night, my dear—I'll see you happy yet," contented him. He could wait for his payment until to-morrow—his payment, such as it was!

It ought to have been—and largely was—that he sent her dancing to bed—dancing, and singing messages to Gervase, to whom, through walls, over roofs and chimney pots, she kissed her hand a dozen times before she blew out her candle.

In the morning, having paid her dues, she told him what was in store. He took it gravely, almost as a right; but he held her long and closely in his arms.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ITALY AND THE LOVERS.

A Duke cannot travel simply, if he would; and our Duke would have maintained—and been right in maintaining—that, traveling as he did, he used to the utmost the simplicity proper to dukes. A traveling carriage with four horses, accordingly, conveyed the party; another, with two horses, the servants—Georgiana's maid, Lady Caroline's, the Duke's body-servant, courier and lackey; finally, a groom on horseback had charge of two led animals in case any of the gentlemen should wish to ride. The Duke rode, in fact, for his allotted number of hours in each day; Charles Lancelot rode for hours on end; Gervase never, but sat with Georgiana in the carriage, or strode by wild paths alone, taking short cuts over mountain, plain, by river and thicket as the mood took him. Later on the journey he used to beguile his mistress into companionship on these adventures; but she was not equipped for them, nor prepared, and seldom went far. So now the reader has material for picturing the dusty, jolting apparatus which dragged across the length of France, clattering and sliding through the cobbled streets of Meaux and Compiègne, Nevers and Avignon, through the wooded ways of Fontainebleau, by the great rivers, the airy slopes, the long white vistas of road, into the drab and burned hill country of Provence. Throughout the journey, and so onward into Italy, the Duke never varied in any one particular his habits of home. He rose at seven and breakfasted on tea and toast. He worked with Charles at the papers and letters which pursued him until ten. He rode till twelve, sat with Georgiana till two, lunched, had his nap, worked or read till it was dark, conversed at large with his friends, dined at eight, expected to be amused until ten—and to bed on the stroke. The retinue, the two coaches, the guests, the inn-keepers and their hinds were all subservient to this routine, which suited him and was strictly maintained.

Georgiana with gentle humor did her full share of its upkeep; Lady Caroline saw it all as a matter of course: a healthy, fresh-colored young woman with straw-colored hair and quantities of it, she had all the tact with which her caste is born, and that intense instinct for smoothness of life which is

its most distinctive quality, and accounts for its strength and weakness at once. She had left a husband and children at home and spoke of them with affectionate interest frequently, but without enthusiasm. Charles Lancelot, of course, ministered like a priest of the altar—but Gervase fumed and raged. Incredible servitude of this absurd gentleman, he would cry, who by a nod of the head could shake himself free of his degrading habits, but, instead, settled his neck deeper into the yoke, and paid through the nose that it might be chained the faster to his old shoulders. There were, according to him, but two ways to travel: one for the family—the holy way; one for the pair. As for the first, the pattern was to be seen in the Flight into Egypt. "If you were indeed mine, my soul, and if you had given me the pledge of the sacrament without which no woman has her seal of election—I would take you into Italy, meek and riding upon an ass, your child and mine upon your lap. I would walk beside you, cheering the way. No road would be too long, no labor too rough—for every step would be taken in joy, and every rock removed would be a work of love. Oh, the happy, long days—oh, the nights of rest in your holy arms!" What would she say to this but, "Ah, my dearest!" Or how reply but by nestling into his arms?

The second way was that of free companions—companions errant, not yet approved for the high estate of parentage. Here the noble walked breast to breast, with no thought but in present joy, with no gear but love in the heart. These were the prime essentials out of which the others—secondary but very real—would engender themselves. Song would flow unbidden from the lips, zest would follow on an appointed round—zest for sleep after toil, zest for toil after sleep, zest for the fruits of love—calm, confidence and peace of mind; and from the zest for love again. "Put beside these necessaries—this bread and this wine of life—the Duke's carriage, lackeys, hamper of state, and you see to what the poor man has come. And we! Ah, faint-hearted ones, what are we doing with two carriages, nine horses, and a horde of camp followers?" What could she do but wonder and admire?

She defended her exalted friend, speaking warmly of his benevolence and greatness of soul, and it is only fair to both of them to say that the Duke defended himself with ability when Gervase attacked him to his face, which he by no means scrupled to do. An odd thing is that the pair got on excellently well. They sparred, but appreciated one another, and each found the inherent simplicity which each had a bond. The Duke, of course, had his way. Not even Gervase, born a mutineer, could dispute it. Indeed, he found himself ministering like one of the household, and within a few days would have expected, with all the rest of them, the heavens to rain blood if the soup was not on table at eight o'clock in the evening. But the young poet liked the man of great affairs, talked to him freely, rated him soundly, on politics, on morals, scorned his opinions of art and letters, and took the drubbings he frequently got in very good part. On one subject they understood each other without a word said. Gervase was an inordinate lover, no doubt, but he had discernment, and was quick to realize the exact state of the case between the Duke and the lady of his heart. "He knows the length of his tether; he gets his pleasure of her in the contemplation of her. He's a better lover than I am. That, indeed, is as near perfection as a lover who is not loved can go." And the Duke, who watched him with his bright, hawk's eyes, saw nothing to disapprove in the ardent ways of this young man with his favorite. He spoke very frankly of the situation to Lady

Caroline Gunner. "Don't you suppose that that pair is in Puy de Dôme with us. Not a bit of it. They are in the Elysian Fields, hand in hand, with the asphodel brushing their knees."

Lady Caroline nodded. "One sees it, of course. It's rather flagrant, don't you think? But very innocent, I'm sure. What does Mr. Lancelot think about it?"

"He doesn't think about it—and I'm not going to let him begin. I like Charles: he's useful to me. But he's no use in the world to her. I told him once that I was in love with his wife, and that there'd be the devil in it if we couldn't make her happy between us. Of course, he couldn't deny that."

"I don't suppose he could," Lady Caroline agreed; "but I don't suppose, either, that he cared about it."

"You can't tell with Charles," said the Duke, "he's so damned sophisticated. He'll never talk, for fear of letting himself know what he thinks of himself." There he had Charles to the life.

Lady Caroline felt it incumbent upon her to protest ever so slightly. "I do think they are rather flagrant, as I said before. Simplicity is all very well, and I like it. But he kisses her hand! But they can't keep their eyes off each other! It's very beautiful, I know—but is it perfectly decent?"

The Duke shrugged, then rubbed his chin.

"I never was a very decent man, myself," he said, "but I often think that the most indecent thing in the world is a pair of br——, let me say, shutters. And Tartufe was the worst blackguard ever put on the stage. Good God, Caroline, if you and I can't live in the Age of Gold, we wish we could, I expect. I know that I do, at all events." Eight o'clock struck; his Grace was served; his Grace went in to dinner, immaculately dressed. The guests followed; but Georgiana turned down the collar of Gervase's coat before they entered the dining room. He wore it so as a protest, he cried out. She put her hand over his mouth.

There remains to be considered Charles; Charles, that son of Misfortune, Charles with his assumptions, the enigma of this tale. One gets him best, I think, by a roundabout way, looking at him as a part of one of the pictures which Georgiana shared in daily. Each picture contained a pair of figures, with characteristic grouping—for there may be seen in one or another the cheerful buxomness of Lady Caroline Gunner with her smoothed fair hair, her ample bosom, and everlasting crochet needles. In the first picture, then, sits Georgiana with a book on her knee, opened but not read, while the Duke, standing by her, stiff as a ramrod, close buttoned and high stocked, speaks over her head, kindly, incisive, desperately frank. In the second she reads deeply, and pinches her lip; near by is Charles, also sitting, not reading, not speaking, shading his tired eyes with his hand. I believe that he has schooled himself not to think in these fare times of relaxation. So at any rate he will sit for an hour or more until Georgiana sighs, looks up from her book, and asks him the hour. He gets out his watch, fixes his glasses, and tells her. She rises slowly, thinks she will go to bed, hopes that it will be fine to-morrow, that the horses will be rested. He echoes all these aspirations with his "Yes, indeed, my love," or, "Ah, to be sure—that is important." She comes to him, stoops, kisses his forehead, and leaves him. He sits on for another spell, not moving, shading his eyes from the light.

In the third picture, which the warm Southern night shrouds in violet, Gervase has her close in his arms. Her face is as pale as her gown, her eyes are as bright as the great wet stars. She is tiptoe to be nearer to him, and her lips drink of his. There is never a

third to this picture, though Gervase would care nothing if there were.

Charles, the harassed gentleman, had no suspicion of Gervase, and thought little about him. He disapproved of him, root and branch, found his nerves on edge very frequently, had nothing to say to him, or of him, and nothing to learn. He was no longer jealous of his patron and friend; even he with all his morbid sensibilities could have had no ground for such doubts after the conversation of the previous autumn. At the present moment his despair of himself, of his power of being to his wife what he had—alas for him!—assumed too readily he once had been and must always be, had settled into a deep and persistent melancholy from which his routine work only could rouse him. At his desk he was the alert and vigilant official he had always been; the moment he left it he became what you have seen him in the picture. He had his small talk, his elaborate locutions, his fund of anecdote to veil himself withal in company. Alone with the Duke he was affable, courteous and resourceful. Lady Caroline liked him exceedingly and never found him dull: but that was because she talked nineteen to the dozen herself.

With Georgiana, and with her only, he was frozen into numb silence. She was a perpetual reproach to him; she witnessed to his conscience damning evidence against him. "Here," she seemed to cry out, "in my heart is the man who won me; I know what he was, what he told me, what I believed. And there—sitting glum and speechless yonder—is the changeling who claims me now. I cry the mercy of the Court." What Court, thought he in his ruth, could deny it her? He felt, poor wretch, like a convict before her, and like a convict despicable for his failure in crime rather than for his crime. Why, he had had the love of this woman! She had admired him, worked for him! He had been the only man in her horizon—and now! And now he could not open his mouth to her. He went before her hangdog, cowed, a cur. His courage was gone. In his heart he knew that he could never cope with her again. The conviction which had agonized him before now turned him to despondency.

But in the great affair of life—the affair of mating—there's no allowance made. Either you can or you can't, and there's an end. The Duke was sorry for Charles and called him "poor devil." He might have been sorry for himself, too, but was not. Gervase, on the other hand, abhorred the poor man, and called him jelly-fish. He roundly declared that he would infinitely rather see Lancelot fiercely the lover of his wife, than know her legally in the power of such a lump of protoplasm as he showed himself to the world. Observers—and there were two at least—expected that the day must come which between Lancelot and Poore would be a day of reckoning.

But the train of carriages and horses and baggage wagons straggled across France, carrying with it well concealed from the natives its private concerns, presenting only the bold English front, with its royal disregard of money and calm acceptance of the best that money can do, which in any other nation than ours would seem to indicate madness. They observed Monseigneur riding his roan beside the great *berline* in which sat the ladies of his family, the one so large and placid who smiled and bowed to right and left as her needles flew, the other slim, elegant and pale, whose eagerness was concealed, whose beauty was of so rare and fragile a type. They saw Charles riding beside his chief and supposed him for what he was; but what did they make of Gervase, that

wild, broad-shouldered young giant of the flushed face and tumble of pale hair forever flying over his eyes, forever tossed back? Those who saw him with the frail lady had no difficulty at all, but to them among whom he strode, flaming eyed, muttering to himself, to whose children he stooped to lift them to his shoulder, to whose dogs he was friendly in a foreign tongue, he was an unrelated apparition. A tutor? A musician? Perchance a poet? Did Monseigneur then nourish a poet? To hymn the deeds of Monseigneur? To amuse the idle hours of his ladies? Ah, *ça!* The English might do stranger things than that.

Sometimes he persuaded Georgiana to walk with him: he would very seldom sit in the carriage, for Lady Caroline bored him to outrage. The poor lady's optimism seemed to him the most arrogant thing he had ever dreamed of. He called it her ointment, and declared that she rolled in it every morning before breakfast. But Georgiana lived before the day of Oread ladies and soon tired, though she felt that she could fly if he would but hold her hand. He took her on a wild adventure in Provence, lost the way, and had her out among rocks and box bushes till far into the night. It was luckily warm and still, and she thought it the most glorious experience she had ever had. But the Duke was very cross and Charles out scouring the countryside until near midnight. Lady Caroline said that it was the first time she had ever seen Mr. Poore at a loss for words; but it is to be remembered that she had not heard him with Georgiana.

They reached Italy in mid-April, traveled by the famous sea road, and were in Florence by May. Here the Duke had hired a Medici villa and kept great state. The poet was kept from his beloved and grew restive. Whereupon Georgiana lost flesh and showed her collar bones.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GENIUS LOCI.

Gervase declared that he felt the entry into Italy by some subtle stirring of the blood, which changed his human vesture and reduced him from the state of civilized, black-coated man to that infinitely finer thing, the unsophisticated child of Nature. Whether that were so or not—and Georgiana believed it to be true—whether he could ever have been considered civilized in our ordinary understanding of civic being, certain it is that from Genoa onwards he ceased to accept the Duke's hospitality. When the party was settled at the Villa Medicea on the bosky slopes of Fiesole, he was understood to be occupying a cave in the woods which hide the Mensola from vulgar eyes. He never appeared in company at the Villa; he was seldom seen by any of the inhabitants of it; his rare visits to them were of the nature of monitions, of storm. He stalked about the shrubberies, scowling, with folded arms; he lectured Lady Caroline upon the frivolity of her pursuits, not as loving whom he chastened by any means, but using the language of lofty indignation, becoming, no doubt, to a god, but unacceptable by the daughter of a marquis and wife of a baron from the son of a half-pay officer. The Duke was very much amused, and sought still more diversion in drawing the young man out; but Gervase would have none of his dry comments. Gervase regarded him just now as the jailer of Georgiana, and had him in horror. He told his perplexed mistress that her name should be more properly Susanna. "I shudder," he said, "I burn for your shame, that you should be here—maintained here—to feed the eyes of these horrible persons. And beyond your prison walls, outside this madhouse of a villa, is Italy, baring her warm breasts, holding open her generous arms to shelter you and me." What

could she do but stare pitifully with her great eyes at the gilded gateways of the Medicea, and long for the milk of the breasts of Italy?

He was there morning and evening—in the cypress alleys of the garden, or among the smoky olives of the *podere* where the tulips and purple anemones washed her feet as she walked girdled with his arm. For she came out to him soon after dawn and stayed with him until the sun was high, and there were few of the close, star-strewn nights when she had to content herself with long looks and whispered words from the balcony of her chamber. Gervase, who had taken only too kindly to Italy, was all for a ladder of rope; but the thought revolted her, and she forbade it. "Not here, my dearest, not here! I dare not—I feel that it would be horrible. It would be treachery." He groaned and protested that it was plain duty, on the contrary. Treachery! He blazed out at the word. "Ah, but you seek to make me a traitor to God."

"To God, dear heart!" she faltered; and he held to it.

"To no less a one. Love is the highest passion we have, and the noblest. It is our inheritance from on high, and leads us directly back to the heights. Many are called, few chosen. But you and I, my soul, you and I have felt the call. How dare we deny our vocation? What earthly convention, what miserable badge of our degradation can be suffered to hold us back? You talk of treachery—and I say, God keep us from treachery!"

"The man has marked you," he said again—referring, if you please, to Charles. "The man has marked you for his, as drovers brand their cattle, or punch the ears of their ponies. To my mind that is so horrible a fact that fire from heaven can scarcely burn it out. What vainer thing could the people imagine than that man should have property in woman, in that vase of election toward which all holiness in man must tend if it would live? It is as if you were to plunge a flower in sugar and expect it to be filmy and graciously open-hearted, fragrant and fresh as once it was, before the devastating hand was laid upon it. Will men never understand that their kingdom is not of this world, nor women either?" He covered his eyes. "I worship in you the dear spirit of God. I would not dare to touch you if I did not believe that I, and I alone, had been chosen from the beginning for your mate." And then he took her. "Mated we are, my heart, in a nobler world than this, a world where dukes are not, nor Treasury officials, but free spirits roaming at large upon their everlasting commerce of contemplation, ecstasy, noble rage: divine business where passion is seen for what it really is, the Godlike energy driving us forth to our work of creation. For we, too, my soul, are gods, and it is ours to seek beauty and to make it. Nothing should hinder us from that—it is our only justification for being here at all. We wrong God, stultify Him, make Him a fool, if we falter and draw back." And then his hot whispering smote at her ears: "Ah, my love, come—come soon, deny me not!"

And what could she do but shiver when, having torn herself from him, she returned into the great, splendid house and found Charles at one end of the room, shading his eyes with his hand, while he perused state papers or some foolish sheet of news of things already done? Or what was she to think of the Duke impatient for his bed, yawning through a game of piquet with Lady Caroline? Gervase had driven home his doctrine: these things were less than nothing, vainer than the bubbles of scum which froth upon a pond.

She lived, poor lady, a double life in these days. Every morning after her

secret communication with her lover, she received a letter in which the words seemed to scald her heart as she read them. Every day she had a sonnet; every night she saw, if she could not speak with, him. Unmarked by herself, her aspect toward the common life of every-day inanity changed. She dwelt apart, if not like the star he proclaimed her, then like an alien from the common lot. But as her self-command was infinitely above that of Gervase, as that of any woman is above that of any man, she went through the duties of her place with a quiet courage which should have made her lover love her more, but, instead, shocked him into silence. It often happened that what she had driven herself to do in public with all her nerve, she had to undo for his peace of mind—with a reënforcement—brought up somehow—of nerve. So she was forever dressing up her soul for the vulgar and stripping it again to show her secret spouse that all was well with her beauty, and that the flame upon the altar of her heart burned clear behind the trappings and weeds. And then—to the masquerade anew! Her endurance was wonderful, but the breaking-point could not be far. The spell of Italy, the soft invitation to surrender with which its mild blue skies, its radiance, its fecund heat wooed her every sense; and its tribute to beauty at every street corner, in every cloister, over every shrine; its sanction to passion, its idolatry of love—as indeed what Gervase preached it—against all this, and with her heart alight, with her body quivering for caresses, her lips athirst, her eyes never yet filled—against all this, what could she do? Now she dallied with the thought. It was possible, yes, it was possible that the perfect life could be lived—here and soon. Not now—oh, not now—but soon!

Gervase, for his part, saw nothing for it but to take her away, and the sooner the better. His case was this—that there was a young and beautiful creature being starved to death of the proper food of all of us. Now starvation may be acquiesced in where there is necessity, as there is when no food can be had. You do not then call Nature murderess, but you say the gods so decree. But if the food is there, are you a robber if you take the famished to where it is? The idea is absurd. In this case Georgiana was starving and Gervase could feed her, he and no other. It seemed to him his plain duty. To accomplish it, therefore, to save her soul alive, he had to do violence to his respect for her gentleness; he had to insist, to harp, to overbear. Also he must keep his eyes open for opportunity, and he did.

The Duke's party was to leave Florence in the middle of May and betake itself to a castle in the Apennines where the summer heats would be tempered by breezes. From thence he thought the deed might be done. Complete visionary as he was, he had no definite idea in his head. He supposed that they would go by night, and would go north. Lake Garda struck him by its name, and its association with Catullus. He would read the poet to her there. He had no expectation of being followed, but in any case would not dream of concealing their whereabouts. If the Duke came after them he should have to use reason and foresaw himself successful; if Lancelot, he should know how to deal. Indignation would help him there; for of the two men, if the Duke made him fume, Lancelot outraged his moral sense as a blasphemer of the holiest. Lancelot represented the abominable law by which a girl, having been cajoled into a union with a man, hateful in its very essence, could be compelled by the prestige of custom to yield to him when her experience and growing sense told her heart that it was horrible. The Duke at least had won her mature re-

gard—but as he had and could have nothing else, one could treat him more gently. There was no reason why the Duke should not continue in her friendship or supply any need to her which she lacked—should there be any. But he smiled as he thought of that, and judged that there would be none. He was a confident young man in most things, but in nothing more absolutely confident than in his possession of Georgiana's heart and mind.

For the future he took no thought at all. Whether Georgiana had money of her own or not, whether, if she had any, it was in her own disposal; how far his own resources could be stretched; by what means one was to live without an income—of these things not a shadow of concern. Literally he confined his preparations to supplying the material of the only pictures which he saw in front of him. He saw a tall machicolated wall, trees on one side of it, a long white road on the other, fading into a far distance of clouds and mountain peaks. At a point of place stood a carriage, at a point of time Georgiana came tiptoe through the gate, and fell with sighs into his arms. He cheered her with kisses—her lips were cold—and high words which brought the love into her eyes; he helped her in, sat beside her; she clung to him, hid her face. The whip cracked, the horses flew; together they looked forward, and presently saw the dawn steal up over the edge of the world. The sun shone upon his beloved, appeased, asleep in his arms. And their life together, as he foresaw it, was to be one long vigil, and one great fruition, a miracle of grace perpetually awaited and infallibly vouchsafed. He saw nothing else; and if obstacles had been pointed out to him would have laughed them to scorn. This is not very curious, perhaps; but what is curious is that, if he could have kept himself, or been kept by his genius, at this high pitch all or any obstacles would have been scornworthy.

To him, with his fiery intellect and ungoverned emotions, love was a furious possession. He himself became a chariot in the holding of a god. He shook under his driver as a man in a fever; he drove now this way, now that, now high, now low—but always straight to the mark. He was capable of the wildest flights, of the most incongruous labors. There was no summit of human activity to which he could not have attained. He could have been prime minister with ease, have led armies across Europe, have managed the Bank of England. These were his times of exaltation, when he was irresistible. But there were others, when he was momentarily emptied of his tenant, and could do nothing—could neither write, nor speak, nor make love. A lethargy lay upon him; his eye lacked luster, his hue was leaden, his blood seemed mud. The sun to him was dark, and silent was the moon; vast and unheaving, barely quivering he lay, until his demon returned from coursing abroad.

Such violent alternations made Georgiana no fatter. Poor soul, she must agonize in either case. With all the mind, she had not the vitality to cope with him. Half-heartedly she panted after him when he led her sweeping through the sky; she exhausted herself in efforts to put spirit into him when he lay, an inert mass, by her knees. She herself, seated by her nature gently in the mean, could neither realize his elation nor fall into his despair. She could have smiled to herself when he addressed her as a supernatural being, if she had not been too much frightened. Alas, she suspected that she was loved by yet another phantom, the victim of new and huge assumptions. He was of the fairy kind, this new spirit, incalculable, wayward, and possibly as ruthless as any of his race. Her charity was abounding; her

love and consideration for him inexhaustible; but it is the fact that although he could be more tender than any woman, he could also be merciless upon occasion, condemning with one tremendous sweep of the hand her life, her conscience, her convincing duties. It meant everything in the world to her, this love of his; but deep in her heart she had the conviction that it could not last. Such wild commerce was not for her.

And yet the assumption was made, and she was to suffer it to take its course, and gather her up in the whirlwind to be made by its beating wings. In moments of perplexity she looked wistfully to the Duke. Would he give her counsel? Dare she ask it of him? But she always shook her head. It would be disloyal to Gervase, as implying distrust. She must tread her way alone.

Of Charles she thought scarcely at all. There was no room in her heart for more than one at a time, and that poor gentleman had never made himself at home there.

So the time drew near when the great Assumption was to be made.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FONTEMAGRA.

The Castle of Fontemagra, with the chestnut woods and the cascade of the Magra for which it is famous, is in the Lunigiana and commands a magnificent western prospect. The bay of Spezzia lies below it; but so deeply below that you would suppose a stone's throw would give you a splash of white in the blue for your pains. The domains cover two hills; the Magra upon its short course runs between. The roads fork from a crucifix about a mile below the Castle: one goes to Chiavari and so to France; the other into Lombardy. The house itself is very fine—a medieval fortress, which Della Spina defended against Castruccio, and where a later and more fortunate Castruccio, the Corsican, Bonaparte—as the Duke always called him, to Gervase Poore's dismay and disgust—stayed more than once during the Italian campaign; a medieval fortress with later additions, Renaissance, post-Renaissance, and frank eighteenth-century imitation pasteboard. The reception rooms should be measured by the acre; the bedrooms would each contain a family. For those who like the Italian style of garden, an art for the stonemason rather than the gardener, I don't know that Fontemagra could be beaten. The way down from the great terrace to the fork in the road, for example—not the carriageway, which goes in enormous spirals of half a mile each, but the footway—is constructed in a series of broad flights of steps relieved by vast amphitheaters of marble balustrades and statues, backed by cut ilex hedges twenty feet high. There are perhaps eight or a dozen of these grandiose resting places; to them alternately the steps converge, from them alternately dilate. More magnificent approach to a stately building can hardly be imagined. From the midmost of them a broad walk leads you to the Cascade of the Magra, whose roar in times of flood can be heard from every room in the castle a thousand feet above it.

The Devizes party installed itself in this princely habitation in May, intending to spend the summer, and brave out the summer heats. It was understood that the Duke intended to devote his leisure to the preparation of his memoirs, and that Charles Lancelot was to give his mind to them. The honest man took the understanding with that seriousness which was his whole justification. Georgiana would have been much interested, but for the urgency of her own affairs. Lady Caroline had just gone home to her family, and Ger-

vase stalked the woods, coming and going fitfully. At the end of May he disappeared altogether. Georgiana, it was supposed, knew where he was. As a fact, she heard from him daily.

During the first week in June, by which time the military routine which was essential to the Duke's well-being had been completely established, she hardly left him for an hour in the day. She said very little to him—nothing indeed of her affairs; but seemed ill at ease if she was away from him, and to like when they were together to take his arm, or give him her hand to hold. He noticed it, of course; he watched her closely, even expected momently that she would confide in him; but she never did that. It was on the tip of his tongue to provoke her to break her silence—he judged it would be easy; but two considerations, one sentimental and one sensual, checked him. It seemed to him a brutality to explore her heart; and this clinging affection gave him extreme pleasure. Its very dumbness excited him; its flattery appealed to his imagination, just as the touch of her stirred his sense. It was like the unexpected attentions of a child given to one who is childless and too much aware of it. The days went slowly, the woods invited her, Gervase, he knew, could not be far off; but yet she would not leave him. She brought him his morning tea and toast with her own hands, sat with him while he took it; was ready for him when he took his walk up and down the terrace, in the still hours, misty with promise, before the sun came streaming over the mountain tops and bade the world be still, left him then only for Charles and the memoirs; rode with him in the woods at noon; read him into the siesta mood after luncheon, and even sat with him while he slept. In the afternoon she prepared his notes for the evening's work with Charles; dressed herself next as he would have her for dinner; played piquet with him after that, and then read to him until it was time for bed. Dull days, and he knew that for her they must be dull, with her heart elsewhere, and her senses young and tingling. Under her gentle ministry of two years, he was relaxing quietly into old age—and felt it; but he could not deny himself this use of her; and afterward he had to live upon the memory of it. She allowed him, indeed, as much as he now wished to have; she had schooled him well. He fondled her, and she seemed to wish it; he kissed her cheek night and morning, and at other times she invited his kisses. She gave no signs of being bored; he fancied that she might have been so if she had *not* been with him. She seemed not to miss the fiery talk, the daring imagery, the hardy probing of mysteries earthly and heavenly with which Gervase Poore made her hours fly. In short, during this one week all her womanly defenses were laid aside: she stood to him almost exactly as the young wife of an old man might be well content to stand—privy to him, at his full discretion; and as such he took her, and was able to justify her confidence.

With Charles, her husband under the law, she was precisely the opposite of all this. She kept away from him as much as she could. This, too, the Duke observed. She almost shunned him. He wondered whether this had a physical or a moral cause. Physical, he thought, when he noticed that she had ceased to give him her cheek; moral, he thought, when he once caught the direction of her eyes, fixed upon the unfortunate man with a kind of penetrating pity, which forgave him and justified her to herself in one and the same keen shaft. During this week the Duke supposed—when he reviewed it afterward—that she and Charles had hardly exchanged three sentences. Good God! he cried to himself, what she must have

suffered—and what he! It was this thought above all others which made him take the line that he did in what was to follow.

She was very far from finding the days dull, passed as they seemed to be in the routine of trivial detail. Probably she had never lived so fast or traveled so far in the whole course of her life. Wings had grown upon her unawares; they lifted her spirit to soar. She could contemplate her own body far below her performing its little functions. Compassion and not compunction sent that to the Duke's, and bid it cherish him while it was possible; the pity of a creature freed for fellow prisoners left behind. She saw nothing of her lover and strong deliverer; did not, presently, hear from him. Everything had been arranged; her hour was fixed. What need of written words, of assurances of the eye, of the arms, of touching lips, when their spirits could meet in the blue—when all night long, while their limbs lay supine, side by side they could stream through the upper air, and thread their swift way in and out of the star-scattered fields of space? Dimly and haltingly as she figured these truths, she lived them intensely; and as her hour drew near her spirits rose, and it seemed to her that she was become so light that her feet would scarcely keep on the ground, and sometimes, coming downstairs, she grew frightened and gripped at the banisters for a hold on herself.

All her pity, all her care, was for the Duke. It was not that she abhorred Charles, but that now he shocked her. He stood for everything that was squalid in life as she now saw it. There was a greatness and a potential freedom about the Duke; but Charles was not only a galley slave, chained to a bench and an oar, but preferred it so. He had assumed intolerably, and now that she was making a greater Assumption than he could dream of she saw his for what they were worth. Not only she had no pity for Charles, but she had a sort of disapproval of him. She kept aloof from him lest some of his tarnish —some breath—should light upon her shining new wings. In all this she was outrageously unfair, to him and to herself; but women of imagination, in love for the first time in their lives, are not human beings, but winged spirits. They are of the company of the nymphs and fairies—beautiful, swift to seek, single-minded, ruthless in purpose, happy only in activity; they belong to the rest of nature, are non-moral and divine. They, with the rest of nature, are of the infinite, because they are non-social, and have no need to make rules for their protection. They need no protection; nor do any of us, until we lose our wings. Then, running to our pathetic fallacy, we cry upon the cruelty of fate. In this we are, of course, absurd; for you cannot at the same time admire the splendor of the storm and hide yourself from it with an umbrella.

The morning of the seventh of June opened with mist, and unfolded by midday to all the fervor of the sun. The leaves winked in the heat, the air seemed liquid and alive; there was no sound but the shrilling of the cicada, or of the lizard rustling dry on the wall. It was too hot to ride. About the darkened house, nevertheless, Georgiana flitted in white like a slim moth. She was pale, large-eyed, and very restless. She hovered about her friend, watching him with intensely deep-seeing eyes, with lips upon which a smile, vague and uninformed, flickered and played and flashed like summer lightning. He was very much aware of it. Once he caught her, looked at her in a way which seemed to challenge her secret. She allowed it, flushed and glowed. He saw, or thought he saw, her eyes grow hot.

"You witch," he said, "you fairy Mab, where are your wits hatching mischief?"

She narrowed her eyes to gleams of dark blue. "Far from here—far away," she said, rather breathlessly.

He felt her heart beat as he held her. "By the Lord," he said, "I believe you are going to play me a trick."

She looked away over the dark length of the room, considering. "Who knows?" she said. And then she turned herself in his arm and looked, not up at him, but at the pin in his cravat. She lifted her hand to it, and turned it as she spoke. "Whatever I do, whatever I am, or become, don't forget that I have loved you as much as I could, and have been proud to be loved by you."

He held her closely. "No, no, my child, I shan't forget. We've been great friends. I never had a greater. You've been more to me than wife and child." Then he kissed her forehead.

She was still thoughtful, and stirred in his arms, her hand and her eyes still busy with the cameo pin. "I like to hear you say that you won't forget. And in your case I believe it. That is much more than merely being flattered, you know. I wish to believe it—and I do."

He looked at her and thought her still a child. She was a mere slip of a thing, like a wand of some willowy tree, which his arm might hold. He knew her not for him, knew that she never had been; but he felt himself growing to dote by reason of the spell of her body's beauty and young strength; and he let her go.

"You fairy," he said, "you fairy wife. When I am under your spell you can do as you please with me."

He saw the gleam of laughing mischief in her eyes. "Don't tempt me," she said, "to prove my power." He pinched her chin.

"On the contrary, my dear, I'll have a shot at proving mine. You shall put on your best gown to-night. I want to see you while the fit is on you to look well. You shift and veer like a weathercock. But the wind is fair from the west to-day. Who knows? To-morrow you may be playing the nun, or droop like a molting hen-pheasant!"

She blushed hotly, looked down, and smiled, then shook her head. "Not to-morrow certainly. I believe, never again."

He gave her a sharp scrutiny. "You feel so sure?" She returned it.

"I feel perfectly sure."

"I wish that I did, Georgie," he said dryly. "Remember, I'm your backer through everything—but sometimes I have qualms."

She gave him her hand then, and while he held it said earnestly: "Have none. And don't forget that nothing will ever make any difference between us. Nothing in the world."

He kissed the little thin hand. "I am sure of it. But I'm not the only one, you know." He jerked his head toward the library. He saw her frown.

For a perceptible pause of time she had no answer. Then she said, "I can't live like this. There's a point beyond which I can't go. It's too much. It's not fair—it's not reasonable. I've tried everything." She shook her head fiercely as if to get a thought out of it. "Don't let us talk—talking is so vain."

She closed her eyes, and when she opened them showed him a new clear light as of a spring morning before the sun. "You want me to look pretty to-night? Well, I will. What shall I wear? You shall dress me."

"By George, I wish you meant that!" he said. She laughed.

"I mean, of course, by order. Martha will be aide-de-camp."

He named the gown, he named the headdress, the very jewels she was to wear. They had been his gift. She promised, and was about to go, but sud-

denly experienced a great access of tenderness, and leaned toward him.

"Dear, kind, trusty friend!" she said, and put her hands on his shoulders. He took her in his arms and held her there. Her tears were not far off, but she held them back. They kissed; she released herself and went to her room.

At dinner her high spirits were maintained. She was pledged by him, and pledged him again; she talked to Charles, laughed at him in a friendly, easy way, and had more to say for herself at that one meal than she had had for a week before. There was about her all the adorable child she had the power of being at will—a playful tenderness, a wooing charm, an innocent malice which had no sting. After dinner she was much quieter, but never depressed or silent. She played out the Duke's piquet, and afterward read to him and Charles, while he nodded and pretended that he did not, and the other sat glooming over his thoughts.

At ten o'clock she rose and put her book away. "I have read enough. Now I am going. Good night." They both stood up, and there followed that which they afterward found memorable. She went to Charles, put a hand lightly on his shoulder, and leaned her cheek to him. "Good night, Charles," she said. Then to the Duke she gave her hand.

"Good night, Duke." Her manner was cool, entirely different from that of a few hours before.

He took her as she chose. "Good night, my lady. Sleep well."

She raised her brows; her eyes looked scared, but there was a play in them, too. "Ah! Who knows? Perhaps I shan't sleep a wink." And then, as he looked at her, she suddenly put up her face to him, and he kissed her fairly.

Upon that she tripped away, but standing at the door, looked back, smiled, and kissed her hand. Within an hour she had left the house—nothing with her—and was with her lover. Even as the two men sat in the library she must have flitted by them along the terrace, and had one been out and about, in that luminous Italian night, never quite dark, one could have seen her white descent down the ghostly broad steps, from terrace to terrace until she was engulfed in the blue depths of the woods.

At the small gate into the road was Gervase cloaked, and carrying a cloak. The moment she appeared he strode forward, and threw this over her. "My Saint—come to me from heaven!" he said; and, "Quick, love, I am burning."

CHAPTER XXIX.

GERVASE'S TEETH.

He took her to a village called Ronciglione, above Rapallo, on a slope of the vine-bright hills which overhang the sea; and there he set up for her a school of love, and taught her the mysteries of it. He encompassed her with all the wild observance which youth and genius ever pay to beauty and gentleness. She was both pliant and enthusiastic. They lived out a dream of the Golden Age; whether it was to last, whether it could last they knew not, neither stayed to inquire. They were nymph and faun, the everlasting shepherd and shepherdess, Daphnis and Chloe of old. Bread and milk, cherries and kisses were their food; fern fronds made their bed; wood doves called them betimes in the morning; poetry was their talk. All her former life floated off like the mists of night before such a dawn as this. It was gone like a feverish dream. She grew rosy, her eyes were like stars. She sighed sometimes and clung to him in a moment's anguish that she had no words wherewith to express her joy.

He had had a moment of worldly wisdom in which he wrote a letter to Lancelot. He wrote very shortly, from Rapallo. "I have her safely here, where she may have for the first time reason-

able life, health, and a knowledge of essential truth. I am to be heard of from the parish priest of this place. If you come, you shall see me, hear me and be heard. Her you shall never see again, God helping."

That punctili observed, he dismissed Charles and the rest of the world from his mind, and betook himself and his beloved to the heights, there to the study and practice of poetry as it might be lived. He had not mentioned to her the fact of his writing, and was satisfied that she had no desire to communicate with the Duke. He waited serenely for the appearance of Charles, of which, sooner or later, he had no doubt.

A week or ten days passed, and then he knew that the hour was come. He was with his mistress under the olive trees upon the headland, in the afternoon. She lay asleep in his arms, her cheek against his breast. He saw afar two horsemen riding the sea road into Rapallo, with a third behind them; he saw them without heartbeats, with a slight quickening only of the pulse. He looked down at his blessed burden. She slept deeply, her lashes brushing the round of her cheek. Her beautiful lips were apart, the sleek, adorable curve of the upper showed a faint smile. "She shall have her sleep out, God bless her. I can give her an hour."

She took less than that, stirred in his arms, and showed to his scrutiny one bright eye, and the smile of one rested and wholly at peace.

"You have dreamed, my soul?"

"Yes, of you."

"I have been watching you. I saw a smile creep over you, like sun over the hills."

"That was because you looked at me."

"Please God you shall always smile when I look at you."

"How can I help it? Your looks tell me that you still love me."

"I shall love you forever."

She sighed. "Oh, I pray for that! I hardly dare believe it."

"Take it for granted, sweetheart."

"No, no, no. I will never take anything of yours for granted. I shall be grateful for everything you do for me, great or small."

He drew her upwards till she was within range of his lips, and began to kiss her. Very soon he drew her kisses again, and they knew the heights and depths of their passion.

Then, holding her close, he said: "My life, you shall leave me now. I have a little work to do alone. Will you go into the house and wait till I come?"

She wondered. "Of course I will, dearest, if you wish it. I mayn't stay with you?"

"I had rather you didn't. I shall be the quicker done if I am alone. I shall come to you in a few minutes with all done. Then you shall kiss me and say that I have done well."

She saw that he was serious; perhaps even she guessed his meaning. She allowed herself a moment's play. "Perhaps you will have done ill, though. What then?"

"You will kiss me all the same. But however it goes I shall report you everything."

"Can I stay here? Or walk about? Must I shut myself in?"

"No, of course not. I would ask you to stop with me, but that I can do what I want to more freely alone. And I want to know where you are in case I should have to find you at a moment's notice."

She puzzled. "You are mysterious, my poet. But I am sure you are not upon poetry just now. And I am not to be told?"

Then he caught her to his heart. "Yes, yes, my love, you shall be told. I thought that I could keep it from you. I thought that you might keep your dreams. No, I'll tell you. Lancelot and the Duke are in Rapallo. They are

coming to see me. Do you wish to be with me?"

She looked very serious, and thought. She shivered a little and sat plucking at the grass. "No," she said presently, "I don't want to see them. Go to them, dearest. I'll wait for you in the house." She got up and left him, without a kiss. He watched her go, then went down toward the sea.

At the bend of the rough road he saw them coming. There was a parapet there which held it up over the abyss. Below that a slim thread of water poured, amid a riot of leaf and fern. Upon it in the shade the Duke sat to rest, while Lancelot, tall and severely elegant, stood looking upward. Gervase came swinging down the road, buttoning his coat across his chest. He was bare-headed, his hair flashed golden in the sun. He had the flushed face and hot blue eyes of the Sun God. Charles saw him, and said to the Duke, "Here's our man." The Duke stood up. "That's the fellow."

Gervase stopped at a ten-foot distance and bowed. "Gentlemen, I have come to meet you," he said, and waited.

Charles was pale, and his dark eyes burned in his head.

"I have come, sir, for my unhappy, my misguided wife. When she is restored to me you and I must have our reckoning."

"We shall reckon now and at once," said Gervase. "I tell you fairly—I have told you already—you will never get her while I am left alive. Misguided you may call her, but unhappy, no. She is happy now, for the first time in her life."

"It is at the cost of her honor and mine if she imagines herself so. It is at the cost of every tie——" Charles began. Gervase sprang into the breach in his ranks.

"It is at the cost of every fetter you have fastened upon her. She is a free woman, her soul is her own. She is no slave now. Your traffic is over. How dare you talk doubtfully of her honor, knowing so little of it, having none of your own?"

"Softly, young man," said the Duke here, but Gervase faced him in turn.

"My lord," he said, "this is no business of yours. You are here, I conceive, as the witness of your friend in what he presently proposes. You shall have your work to do when we come to that. But I am going to give this gentleman something to fight about."

"You are quite right," said the Duke, "and I beg your pardon."

Gervase turned to Charles. "I have the ordinary perceptions of a man, sharpened by my love for her whose confidence you have abused. I know the miserable history of your marriage. She never loved you. How should she, seeing that before you claimed her she had known nothing of men? But you took her affections for granted; you thought that she would do what you call her duty. You claimed her from her parents, and expected to have her heart thrown in. You fool, and you might have had it if you had been able to forget yourself for half an hour a day; and you might have kept it if you had known that a woman was not a thing to be bought, like a horse or a piece of furniture. But, no! You cling to the law—the law which was devised by horrible old men who used women as cattle —as brood mares, who could be put to draft work when not with young; who disposed of them as property. And under that law which says, covet not a man's house, covet not his wife, nor his ox, you shelter yourself, forsooth! You smug rascal, what of her own soul? What of her free will, of her clear eyes, of her judgment, of her character? Are these of no account in the bargain? If they are not, you are a trafficker, neither more nor less; you buy cheap in the market place; but if they are, and if they *were* of account

when you took her, it was your plain business to approve yourself to her, to justify the confidence of her youth. It was your simple duty to implant love in her heart, since even you, I suppose, can understand that without love no woman can become so. Well, and what did you do? How did you justify your assumption of her in her innocence? What did you do to bring love to flower in her heart?

"You! I tell you what you did. You assumed the rights of a husband—not of a lover, which you have never been; but of a husband. You said, I have taken a wife as an incident of my career. I will work abroad and she at home, that I may make a name for myself. Why, you assume everything! You assume the necessity of your career—and I give it you; but you assume the necessity of her part in it—and that you shan't have. Pray, is a career the prerogative of the male? May it not be that your business should be to serve *her*, rather? Not only is that possible, but I tell you that it is certain. She has a plain right to be served by any man who has the grace to see that she is a vase of piety, a fountain of honor and truth, a living symbol of the beauty of God in heaven. But such things as these you are incapable of seeing. You are a woman user.

"What did you then? You worked all day long at your sordid affairs of money getting, station making. You left her alone without your confidence, without interests or the means of getting them; and when you returned to her, it was not to serve her, but to take your ease. To relax your efforts of the day, you assumed your right to be dull. Not only so, but that you might be duller it was her business, said you, to be cheerful. Pray, what scope for cheer had she, boxed in your house with you for a partner? What business had you to be dull with so lovely a being at your side? How dared you assume a right to be served by such as she is, a messenger from the sky, an angel from heaven? How dared you sink in your dullness, and pretend in the same breath that you loved? You love! Do you know what love is? Do you know that it is a high ecstasy of wonder and service? You say that you love; but love raises a man on wings—and you sank. You sank deeper and deeper in dullness, and you expected her to share your dullness. How dare you to expect that of her? How pretend to love her and make her your drudge? Pooh, sir, it was yourself that you loved, and always have. There is respect in love, and a passion to give, and give, and never be done with giving. Love is a noble rage to beggar yourself for the beloved. It is a noble fire to excel that the beloved may have glory. You have never loved any but yourself. You took her for your convenience, and used her for your needs.

"Fie upon you, there is worse to come." His eyes blazed in his head. He took some steps forward and raised his hand to drive in the blows of his word. "You used her vilely; for your purposes you made her your lure. You traded her beauty, her youth and grace, her purity, her divine attributes. You sent her abroad that she might attract this man's looks"—he swept the Duke into the parley—"that so he might consider your advancement as a means to his own. You knew his character; you knew his ways; you schooled her in this horrible traffic; you became a hirer; you followed what, examined candidly, is the most shameful trade known to this world—and I'll say no more about it. Employed in this ghastly business I found her, and knew her for what she was. I adored her, I saw God and all heaven in her eyes; I thought of her night and day, and prepared to serve her. And I have. I have opened her eyes to truth, her heart to love, her soul to the all-pervading God. She is free,

she is happy, she is hopeful of all good things. She will be a mother, she will love her children, and they will love her. The world, which has passed her by, will be the richer of her; for I will take care that all men know what a glory and miracle she is. It was Dante's boast that he would report of his beloved things which had never been written of women. That also will I do. I will school the world in the knowledge and love of grace and purity and truth as they are manifested in her. I am a singer, I believe. I shall never sing of any but her—and my whole life shall be a song of praise and thanksgiving. For not only with my lips will I show her radiance, but in every act of mine done in her honor.

"I have done, sir. Now you may have your pleasure of me." He folded his arms over his chest, which heaved with his tide of rage. He bent his head as a man who expects, looking upward from under his brows at his enemy.

But Charles had nothing to say at present. He had listened with amazement to the torrent of words. He had expected nothing of the kind from the man whom he looked upon as the traitor; but here was himself put on his defense. He was never a ready speaker.

"I shall not attempt to answer your attack," he said presently. "You deal in abusive terms. I cannot follow you. I demand of you the satisfaction which one man owes to another. If you will give me the name of your friend, his Grace here will undertake what may be necessary. I have listened to you long, and to little purpose, that I see."

"I have no friend in the place, as you may easily understand," Gervase replied; "nor do I see the harm of any little irregularity in this game of homicide. You can shoot me at once, if you please. I have no weapon, it is true; but if I had one I shouldn't use it, so I don't think that need hinder you. If you please to lend me one of yours, I will hold it—to give you a countenance. But let it be understood beforehand that you offer no molestation to your wife."

"I give you no undertaking whatever," said Charles.

"In that case," Gervase said, "I decline to meet you until I have bestowed her in safety."

The Duke interposed. "Now, Mr. Poore, perhaps you'll listen to me. You stopped me before—and properly; but since then you've brought me into the affair, and you can't stop me again. Allow me to point out to you in the first place that you have abused my hospitality."

"I beg your pardon, my lord," said Gervase. "I was not a guest of yours."

"That's a quibble, my man. You would never have been here if I had not asked you."

"Nor would Mrs. Lancelot, my lord," said Gervase.

"Next," said the Duke, "while you profess to serve this lady whom you have tempted from her home, you have done her a very bad turn among her friends. You don't suppose that these things are to be done without scandal—eh?"

Gervase, metaphorically, flew at his throat.

"Scandal, my lord? Who are you to consider scandal when you have set it buzzing about her like flies for the last two years? Do you know what has been said of her by the rascals of the gutter? Maybe you do not; but I who have stood at the doors of your great houses for the mere glimpse of her passing, I know too well. Do you know what your own associates say? You must needs know that. Condemn me if you will, but not where you are in a worse condemnation than I. For you took her into your house, with that wretched man over there trailing behind her, consenting for the sake of his worldly profit, and made the thing hideous. But I take her out of these ser-

aglios and get her into the clean air. For the sake of eternal welfare and honor, it may be necessary to endure a little foul usage from a world of satyrs and swine, since unhappily among such our lot is cast; but it will be over before she sees England again; and meantime she can be happy in the possession of her free soul—here, in this noble country where all are free as she shall be."

The Duke took snuff, and considered his reply. "You are a forcible reasoner, Mr. Poore," he said presently, but not before he had taken a turn or two up and down the road. "You can put your case. Damn it, man, I'm not above confessing that a good deal of what you have said hits me hard. I'm old enough to say so, but I'll add this for myself, that I intended that dear friend no harm at all, and that I don't believe I have done her any. Mind you, also, the stuff I take her to be of is yours and mine, too. I think she is of our human clay, not so tarnishable as the rare crystal of your imagination. She's a beloved woman, but she's a woman to me, and dear because she's a woman rather than an angel. But then you're a poet and I'm a man of the world. Now, mere scandal I can afford to overlook, as you say that you can, for reason good. I don't hear very much of it—I'm too much occupied with other matters—and don't pay any regard to that which I do overhear. Perhaps, if I had kept the company you report yourself as keeping, I should have disliked the form in which it was put—but I don't know. I'm not squeamish, and I've a notion that hard words hurt nobody, least of all one who was, as she, above reproach. God bless her, *she* didn't hear any of it—so far as I know. That's all I wish to say." He considered further, and then came nearer.

"Now, Mr. Poore, I hope you don't suspect me of evil designs. I'll tell you this much, that long before you came upon her scene she had made me incapable of that. When she is willing to see me I shall be more than ready. You may tell her that with my love, the love of a man who has derived more comfort than he deserves from her companionship. There's my last word, but I'm not the most concerned. I don't advise my friend here to fight you, and I don't think he will. But you shall hear." The Duke nodded his head, touched the brim of his hat. "Good day to you, Mr. Poore," he said, and turned to descend the hill; but Gervase went after him.

"My lord, I beg one moment of you." The Duke stopped to listen.

"You have spoken," said the young man, "kindly and handsomely. I am much obliged to you. Be sure that your message shall be faithfully delivered."

The Duke nodded. "I am sure," he said. Gervase hovered; he was very red and hot.

"By God in heaven, Duke, you may trust her with me." The moment was emotional, and the Duke disliked nothing so much. He lifted his head sharply, his cold eyes flamed.

"Why, you young donkey, do you suppose you'd have been alive at this moment if I had not believed in you? By Gad, sir, I'd have shot you like a rat in a pigsty. Good day to you." With that he marched down the hill, leaving Charles in the lurch. But he did not intend Charles to fight, and assumed that Charles, therefore, would not fight.

And rightly. There was no fight in Charles. Throughout the passage between the two lovers of his wife he had stood with head sunk into his breast. Now that one of them had left him he awaited the other, and as he returned lifted up his colorless face and turned him his faded eyes. He could hardly speak above a whisper, and was forced, against his House-of-Commons, Treasury manner, to emphasize every sen-

tence with a jerk of the hand. It added to the sense of effort, and was painful to behold.

He said, while the young man heard him with distress: "Mr. Poore, you have said harsh things to me, and I have not answered them. I cannot answer them, for I believe that most of them are very true."

Gervase, touched to generosity in a moment, would have stopped him, and did indeed extend his hands in deprecation of his recent attack. But Charles only hurried on.

"You cannot have known how true your words were, for if you had they would have been still more terrible—more unanswerable still. Mr. Poore, I am moved to confess to you that the death of her child lies at my door."

"Oh, no, no!" cried Gervase.

"But it is so. She overtaxed her strength when her health could not afford it—when all that she had was called for. She did that to serve me—as she thought, and as I thought. God help me to forgiveness—I am a sinful man."

He changed his tone, having mastered his emotion. Then he continued more quietly. "You have convinced me that I have used her ill. Yes, yes!" And here his voice broke altogether, and he had to turn away his head. Gervase made a movement of the hands to stay him, but Charles recovered. "Yes, yes, loving her as I did, and do, I loved myself more, and have served myself worst of all. So far you have convinced me—but not that I do not love her. Ah, Mr. Poore, I can convince you that I love her devotedly." Inspired by his feeling, he came to the poet with his arms extended as if he would take his pair of hands. "Desiring now her welfare above all things, seeking only to satisfy the call of her heart, of her nature, and of her conscience, I resign my claims to her—I resign her care to you. So far as I am concerned—with my perpetual prayers for her happiness—she is free. She shall be free altogether, by legal means, so soon as may be—she and her fortune."

"No, no," said Gervase. "She will never touch it. I can say no more now. You have put me at your feet."

"Say nothing to her of me," said Charles. "Let her forget me as soon as she may. I would ask her forgiveness but that I know I have it, and desire above all things now that the past may be as dead to her. For her sake, I hope we may never meet again."

"She is here—she is close at hand," Gervase told him, now in a state in which he too would have renounced everything that he had gained. "She will see you, if you——"

"God forbid," said Charles. "I charge you with her welfare. I will do nothing to impair it. So soon as I am in England I will put matters in train. She shall be free to be your wife—entirely free."

Gervase stood with folded arms, unable to look up. Charles nervously took off his gloves and slipped a ring from his finger.

"When I was married," he said, "I gave myself this ring upon my wedding day. It was to remind myself of my duty—which, you tell me—and I acknowledge—I too soon forgot. Accept it from me. I don't ask you to wear it, but to keep it."

"I will not refuse," said Gervase. "I take it as a sign that you trust me."

The ring was handed over. Charles touched his hat, turned and walked down the hill. Gervase stood motionless, staring at the sea. There, as it grew dusk, Georgiana found him. She came behind him softly and touched his arm. He turned, looked at her wildly. She implored, with eyes and moving lips. He gave a cry, and clasped her to his heart. "By God, by God, my Saint, I shall love you on my knees!"

by

P. G. Wodehouse

Author of "A Damsel in Distress"

The Romance of an Ugly Policeman

CROSSING the Thames by Chelsea Bridge, the wanderer through London finds himself in pleasant Battersea. Rounding the park, where the female of the species wanders with its young by the ornamental water where the wild fowl are, he comes upon a vast road. One side of this is given up to nature, the other to intellect; on the right, green trees stretch into the middle distance; on the left, endless blocks of residential flats. It is Battersea Park Road, the home of the cliff dwellers.

Police Constable Plimmer's beat embraced the first quarter of a mile of the cliffs. It was his duty to pace, in the measured fashion of the London policeman, along the front of them, turn to the right, turn to the left, and come back along the road that ran behind them. In this way he was enabled to keep the king's peace over no fewer than four blocks of mansions.

It did not require a deal of keeping. Battersea may have its tough citizens, but they do not live in Battersea Park Road. Battersea Park Road's specialty is brain, not crime. Authors, musicians, newspaper men, actors, and artists are the inhabitants of these mansions. A child could control them. They assault and batter nothing but pianos; they steal nothing but ideas; they murder nobody except Chopin and Beethoven. Not through these shall an ambitious young constable achieve promotion.

At this conclusion Edward Plimmer arrived within forty-eight hours of his installation. He recognized the flats for what they were—just so many layers of big-brained blamelessness. And there was not even the chance of a burglary. No burglar wastes his time burgling authors. Constable Plimmer reconciled his mind to the fact that his term in Battersea must be looked on as something in the nature of a vacation.

He was not altogether sorry. At first, indeed, he found the new atmosphere soothing. His last beat had been in the heart of tempestuous Whitechapel, where his arms had ached from the incessant hauling of wiry inebriates to the station, and his shins had revolted at the kicks showered upon them by haughty spirits impatient of restraint. Also, one Saturday night, three friends of a gentleman whom he was trying to induce not to murder his wife had so wrought upon him that, when he came out of hospital, his already homely appearance was further marred by a nose that resembled the gnarled root of a tree. All these things had taken from the charm of Whitechapel, and the cloistral peace of Battersea Park Road was comforting.

And just when the unbroken calm had begun to lose its attraction and dreams of action were once more troubling him, a new interest entered his life; and, with its coming, he ceased to wish to be removed from Battersea. He fell in love.

It happened at the back of the York Mansions. Anything that ever happens happens there, for it is at the back of these blocks of flats that the real life is. At the front you never see anything, except an occasional tousle-headed young man smoking a pipe; but at the back, where the cooks come out to parley with the tradesmen, there is at certain hours of the day quite a respectable activity. Pointed dialogues about yesterday's eggs and the toughness of Saturday's meat are conducted fortissimo between cheerful youths in the road and satirical young women in print dresses who come out of their kitchen doors onto little balconies.

The whole thing has a pleasing Romeo-and-Juliet touch. Romeo rattles up in his cart.

"Sixty-four!" he cries. "Sixty-fower, sixty-fower, sixty-fow——"

The kitchen door opens, and Juliet emerges. She eyes Romeo without any great show of affection.

"Are you Perkins & Blissett?" she inquires coldly. Romeo admits it. "Two of them yesterday's eggs was bad."

Romeo protests. He defends his eggs. They were fresh from the hen; he stood over her while she laid them. Juliet listens frigidly.

"I *don't* think!" she says. "Well, half of sugar, one marmalade, and two of breakfast bacon," she adds, and ends the argument.

There is a rattling as of a steamer weighing anchor; the goods go up in the tradesman's lift; Juliet collects them and exits, banging door. The little drama is over.

Such is life at the back of York Mansions—a busy, throbbing thing.

The peace of afternoon had fallen upon the world one day toward the end of Constable Plimmer's second week of the simple life, when his attention was attracted by a whistle. It was followed by a musical "Hi!"

Constable Plimmer looked up. On the kitchen balcony of a second-floor flat a girl was standing. As he took her in with a slow and exhaustive gaze, he was aware of strange thrills. There was something about this girl that excited Constable Plimmer. I do not say that she was a beauty; I do not claim that you or I would have raved about her; I merely say that Constable Plimmer thought she was All Right.

"Miss?" he said.

"Got the time about you?" said the girl. "All the clocks have stopped."

"The time," said Constable Plimmer, consulting his watch, "wants exactly ten minutes of four."

"Thanks."

"Not at all, miss."

The girl was inclined for conversation. It was that gracious hour of the day when you have cleared lunch and haven't got to think of dinner yet and

have a bit of time to draw a breath or two. She leaned over the balcony and smiled pleasantly.

"If you want to know the time, ask a pleeceman," she said. "You been on this beat long?"

"Just short of two weeks, miss."

"I been here three days."

"I hope you like it, miss."

"So-so. The milkman's a nice boy."

Constable Plimmer did not reply. He was busy silently hating the milkman. He knew him—one of those good-looking blighters; one of those oiled and curled perishers; one of those blooming fascinators who go about the world making things hard for ugly, honest men with loving hearts. Oh, yes, he knew the milkman.

"He's a rare one with his jokes," said the girl.

Constable Plimmer went on not replying. He was perfectly aware that the milkman was a rare one with his jokes. He had heard him. The way girls fell for any one with the gift of the gab—that was what embittered Constable Plimmer.

"He"—she giggled—"he calls me, 'Little Pansyface.' "

"If you'll excuse me, miss," said Constable Plimmer coldly, "I'll have to be getting along on my beat."

Little Pansyface! And you couldn't arrest him for it! What a world! Constable Plimmer paced upon his way, a blue-clad volcano.

It is a terrible thing to be obsessed by a milkman. To Constable Plimmer's disordered imagination it seemed that, dating from this interview, the world became one solid milkman. Wherever he went, he seemed to run into this milkman. If he was in the front road, this milkman—Alf Brooks, it appeared, was his loathsome name—came rattling past with his jingling cans, as if he were Apollo driving his chariot. If he was around at the back, there was Alf, his damned tenor doing duets with the balconies. And all this in defiance of the known law of natural history that milkmen do not come out after five in the morning. This irritated Constable Plimmer. You talk of a man "going home with the milk" when you mean that he sneaks in in the small hours of the morning. If all milkmen were like Alf Brooks, the phrase was meaningless.

He brooded. The unfairness of fate was souring him. A man expects trouble in his affairs of the heart from soldiers and sailors, and to be cut out by even a postman is to fall before a worthy foe; but milkmen—no. Only grocers' assistants and telegraph boys were intended by Providence to fear milkmen.

Yet here was Alf Brooks, contrary to all natural rules, the established pet of the mansions. Bright eyes shone from balconies when his "Milk-oo-oo!" sounded. Golden voices giggled delightedly at his bellowed chaff. And Ellen Brown, whom he called "Little Pansyface," was definitely in love with him. They were keeping company. They were walking out.

This crushing truth Edward Plimmer learned from Ellen herself. She had slipped out to mail a letter at the pillar box on the corner, and she reached it just as the policeman arrived there in the course of his patrol.

Nervousness impelled Constable Plimmer to be arch.

" 'Ullo, 'ullo, 'ullo!" he said. "Posting love letters?"

"What, me? This is to the police commissioner, telling him you're no good."

"I'll give it to him. Him and me are taking supper to-night."

Nature had never intended Constable Plimmer to be playful. He was at his worst when he rollicked. He snatched at the letter with what was meant to be a debonair gayety, and only succeeded

in looking like an angry gorilla. The girl uttered a startled squeak.

The letter was addressed to Mr. A. Brooks.

Playfulness, after this, was at a discount. The girl was frightened and angry, and he was scowling with mingled jealousy and dismay.

"Ho!" he said. "Ho! Mr. A. Brooks!"

Ellen Brown was a nice girl, but she had a temper, and there were moments when her manners lacked rather noticeably the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

"Well, what about it?" she cried. "Can't one write to the young gentleman one's keeping company with, without having to get permission from every"—she paused to marshal her forces for the assault—"without having to get permission from every great, ugly, red-faced copper, with big feet and broken noses, in London?"

Constable Plimmer's wrath faded into a dull unhappiness. Yes, she was right. That was the correct description. That was how an impartial Scotland Yard would be compelled to describe him, if ever he got lost: "Missing—a great, ugly, red-faced copper, with big feet and a broken nose." They would never find him otherwise.

"Perhaps you object to my walking out with Alf? Perhaps you've got something against him? I suppose you're jealous!"

She threw in the last suggestion entirely in a sporting spirit. She loved battle, and she had a feeling that this one was going to finish far too quickly. To prolong it, she gave him this opening. There were a dozen ways in which he might answer, each more insulting than the last; and then, when he had finished, she could begin again. These little encounters, she held, sharpened the wits, stimulated the circulation, and kept one out in the open air.

"Yes," said Constable Plimmer.

It was the only reply she was not expecting. For direct abuse, for sarcasm, for dignity, for almost any speech beginning, "What? Jealous of *you*! Why——" she was prepared. But this was incredible. It disabled her, as the wild thrust of an unskilled fencer will disable a master of the rapier. She searched her mind, and found that she had nothing to say.

There was a tense moment in which she found him, looking her in the eyes, strangely less ugly than she had supposed; and then he was gone, rolling along on his beat with that air which all policemen must achieve, of having no feelings at all and—as long as it behaves itself—no interest in the human race.

Ellen posted her letter. She dropped it into the box thoughtfully, and thoughtfully returned to the flat. She looked over her shoulder, but Constable Plimmer was out of sight.

Peaceful Battersea began to vex Constable Plimmer. To a man crossed in love, action is the one anodyne. And Battersea gave no scope for action. He dreamed now of the old Whitechapel days as a man dreams of the joys of his childhood. He reflected bitterly that a fellow never knows when he is well off in this world. Any one of those myriad drunks and disorderlies would have been as balm to him now. He was like a man who has run through a fortune, and in poverty eats the bread of regret. Amazedly he recollected that in those happy days he had grumbled at his lot. He remembered confiding to a friend in the station house, as he had rubbed with liniment the spot on his right shin where the well-shod foot of a joyous costermonger had got home, that this sort of thing—meaning militant costermongers—was "a bit too thick." A bit too thick! Why, he would pay one to kick him now! And as for the three loyal friends of the

would-be wife murderer who had broken his nose, if he had seen them coming round the corner, he would have welcomed them as brothers.

And Battersea Park Road dozed on—calm, intellectual, law-abiding.

A friend of his told him that there had once been a murder in one of these flats. He did not believe it. If any of these white-corpuscled clams ever swatted a fly, it was as much as they could do. The thing was ridiculous, on the face of it. If they were capable of murder, they would have murdered Alf Brooks.

He stood in the road and looked up at the placid buildings resentfully.

"Grr-rr-rr!" he growled, and kicked the sidewalk.

And, even as he spoke, on the balcony of a second-floor flat there appeared a woman—an elderly, sharp-faced woman, who waved her arms and screamed:

"Policeman! Officer! Come up here! Come up here at once!"

Up the stone stairs went Constable Plimmer on the run. His mind was alert and questioning. Murder? Hardly murder, perhaps. If it had been that, the woman would have said so. She did not look the sort of woman who would be reticent about a thing like that. Well, anyway, it was something!

The sharp-faced woman was waiting for him at the door. He followed her into the flat.

"What is it, ma'am?"

"Theft! Our cook has been stealing."

She seemed sufficiently excited about it, but Constable Plimmer felt only depression and disappointment. A stout admirer of the sex, he hated arresting women. Moreover, to a man in the mood to tackle anarchists with bombs, to be confronted with petty theft is falling. But duty was duty. He produced his notebook.

"She is in her room. I locked her in. I have missed money. You must search her."

"Can't do that, ma'am. Female searcher at the station."

"Well, you can search her box."

A little, bald, nervous man in spectacles appeared, as if out of a trap. As a matter of fact, he had been there all the time, standing by the bookcase. But he was one of those men you do not notice till they move and speak.

"Er—Jane!"

"Well, Henry?"

The little man seemed to swallow something.

"I—I think that you may possibly be wronging Ellen. It is just possible, as regards the money——" He smiled in a ghastly manner, and turned to the policeman. "Er—officer, I ought to tell you that my wife—ah—holds the purse strings of our little home; and it is just possible that, in an absent-minded moment, *I* may have——"

"Do you mean to tell me, Henry, that *you* have been taking my money?"

"My dear, it is just possible that in an abs——"

"How often?"

He wavered perceptibly. Confidence was beginning to lose its grip.

"Oh, not often."

"*How* often? More than once?"

Conscience had shot its bolt. The little man gave up the struggle.

"No, no, not more than once. Certainly not more than once."

"You ought not to have done it at all. We will talk about that later. It doesn't alter the fact that Ellen is a thief. I have missed money half a dozen times. Step this way, officer."

Constable Plimmer stepped that way—his face a mask. He knew who was waiting for them behind the locked door at the end of the passage. But it was his duty to look as if he were stuffed, and he did so.

She was sitting on her bed, dressed for the street. It was her afternoon

out, the sharp-faced woman had informed Constable Plimmer. She was pale, and there was a hunted look in her eyes.

"You wicked girl!" said the sharp-faced woman.

"I never took no money," answered the girl quietly.

"Well, it's gone, and money doesn't go by itself. Take her to the police station, officer."

Constable Plimmer raised heavy eyes. "You make a charge, ma'am?"

"Bless the man! Of course I make a charge! What did you think I asked you to step in for?"

"Will you come along, miss?" said Constable Plimmer.

They walked in silence. Constable Plimmer was a man with a rigid sense of what was and what was not fitting behavior in a policeman on duty; he aimed always at a machinelike impersonality. There were times when it came hard, but he did his best. He strode on, his chin up and his eyes averted. And beside him——

Well, she was not crying. That was something.

Round the corner, beautiful in light flannel, gay at both ends with a new straw hat and the yellowest shoes in southwest London, scented, curled, a prince among young men, stood Alf Brooks. He was feeling piqued. When he said three o'clock, he meant three o'clock. It was now three fifteen, and she had not appeared. Alf Brooks swore an impatient oath, and the thought crossed his mind, as it had sometimes crossed it before, that Ellen Brown was not the only girl in the world.

"Give her another five min——"

Ellen Brown, with escort, turned the corner.

Rage was the first emotion that the spectacle aroused in Alf Brooks. Girls who kept a fellow waiting about while they fooled around with policemen were no girls for him. They could understand once and for all that he was a man who could pick and choose.

And then an electric shock set the world dancing mistily before his eyes. This policeman was wearing his belt. He was on duty. And Ellen's face was not the face of a girl strolling with the force for pleasure.

His heart stopped, and then began to race. His cheeks flushed a dusky crimson. His jaw fell, and a prickly warmth glowed in the parts about his spine.

"Goo' Lor'! She's bin pinched!"

He tugged at his collar. It was choking him.

Alf Brooks did not show up well in the first real crisis that life had forced upon him. That must be admitted. Later, when it was over and he had leisure for self-examination, he admitted it to himself. But even then he excused himself by asking space in a blustering manner what else he could 'a' done. And if the question did not bring much balm to his soul at the first time of asking, it proved wonderfully soothing on constant repetition. He repeated it at intervals for the next two days, and by the end of that time his cure was complete. On the third morning his "Milk-oo-oo!" had regained its customary carefree ring, and he was feeling that he had acted, in difficult circumstances, in the only possible manner.

Consider: He was Alf Brooks, well known and respected in the neighborhood, a singer in the choir on Sundays, owner of a milk walk in the most fashionable part of Battersea, to all practical purposes a public man. Was he to recognize, in broad daylight and in open street, a girl who walked with a policeman because she had to, a malefactor, a girl who had been pinched?

Ellen, Constable Plimmer woodenly at her side, came toward him. She was ten yards off—seven—five—three—one——

Alf Brooks tilted his hat over his

eyes and walked past her, unseeing, a stranger.

He hurried on. He was conscious of a curious feeling that somebody was just going to kick him, but he dared not look around.

Constable Plimmer eyed the middle distance with an earnest gaze. His face was redder than ever. Beneath his blue tunic strange emotions were at work. Something seemed to be filling his throat. He tried to swallow it.

He stopped in his stride. The girl glanced up at him in a kind of dull, questioning wonder. Their eyes met for the first time that afternoon, and it seemed to Constable Plimmer that whatever it was that was interfering with the inside of his throat had grown larger and more unmanageable.

There was the misery of the stricken animal in her gaze. He had seen women look like that in Whitechapel. The woman to whom indirectly he owed his broken nose had looked like that. As his hand had fallen on the collar of the man who was kicking her to death, he had seen her eyes. They were Ellen's eyes, as she stood there now—tortured, crushed, yet uncomplaining.

Constable Plimmer looked at Ellen, and Ellen looked at Constable Plimmer.

"Hop it!" said Constable Plimmer.

He spoke gruffly. He found speech difficult.

The girl started.

"What say?"

"Hop it! Get along! Run away!"

"What do you mean?"

Constable Plimmer scowled. His face was scarlet. His jaw protruded like a granite breakwater.

"Go on!" he growled. "Hop it! Tell him it was all a joke. I'll explain at the station."

Understanding seemed to come to her slowly.

"Do you mean I'm to go?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean? You aren't going to take me to the station?"

"No."

She stared at him. Then suddenly she broke down.

"He wouldn't look at me! He was ashamed of me! He pretended not to see me!"

She leaned against the wall, her back shaking.

"Well, run after him, and tell him it was all——"

"No! No! No!"

Constable Plimmer looked morosely at the sidewalk. He kicked it.

She turned. Her eyes were red, but she was no longer crying. Her chin had a brave tilt.

"I couldn't—not after what he did. Let's go along. I—I don't care."

She looked at him curiously.

"Were you really going to let me go?"

Constable Plimmer nodded. He was aware of her eyes searching his face, but he did not meet them.

"Why?"

He did not answer.

"What would have happened to you if you had done that?"

Constable Plimmer's scowl was of the stuff which nightmares are made.

"Dismissed from the force," he said curtly.

"And sent to prison, too, I shouldn't wonder."

"Maybe."

He heard her draw a deep breath, and silence fell upon them again. The dog down the road had stopped barking. The woman in the flat had stopped singing. They were curiously alone.

"Would you have done all that for me?" she said.

"Yes."

"Why?"

He swung around on her, almost threateningly.

"Why?" he said hoarsely. "Because I love you. That's why. Now I've said it, and now you can go on and laugh at me as much as you want."

"I'm not laughing," she said soberly.

"You think I'm a fool."

"No, I don't."

"I'm nothing to you. *He's* the fellow you're stuck on."

She gave a little shudder.

"No."

"What do you mean?"

"I've changed." She paused. "I think I shall have changed more by the time I come out."

"Come out?"

"Come out of prison."

"You're not going to prison."

"Yes, I am."

"I won't take you."

"Yes, you will. Think I'm going to let you get yourself in trouble like that, to get me out of a fix? Not much!"

"You hop it, like a good girl."

"Not me!"

He stood looking at her like a puzzled bear.

"They can't eat me."

"They'll cut off all your hair."

"D'you like my hair?"

"Yes."

"Well, it'll grow again."

"Don't stand talking. Hop it!"

"I won't. Where's the station?"

"Next street."

"Well, come along, then."

The blue-glass lamp of the police station came into sight, and for an instant she stopped. Then she was walking on again, her chin tilted. But her voice shook a little as she spoke:

"Nearly there. Next stop, Battersea. All change! I say, mister—I don't know your name."

"Plimmer's my name, miss. Edward Plimmer."

"I wonder if—I mean it'll be pretty lonely where I'm going—I wonder if —— What I mean is, it would be rather a lark, when I come out, if I was to find a pal waiting for me to say 'Hello!'"

Constable Plimmer braced his ample feet against the stones, and turned purple.

"Miss," he said, "I'll be there, if I have to sit up all night. The first thing you'll see when they open the doors is a great, ugly, red-faced copper, with big feet and a broken nose. And, miss"—he clenched his hands till the nails hurt the leathern flesh—"and, miss, there's just one more thing I'd like to say. You'll be having a good deal of time to yourself for a while—you'll be able to do a good bit of thinking without any one to disturb you; and what I'd like you to give your mind to, if you don't object, is just to think whether you can't forget that narrow-chested, God-forsaken blighter who treated you so mean, and get halfway fond of some one who knows jolly well you're the only girl there is."

She looked past him at the lamp that hung, blue and forbidding, over the station door.

"How long'll I get?" she said. "What will they give me? Thirty days?"

He nodded.

"It won't take me as long as that," she said. "I say, what do people call you—people who are fond of you, I mean? Eddie, or Ted?"

The world pirouetted before Constable Plimmer's eyes. A small boy passed, rattling a stick along the railings of the houses opposite. To Constable Plimmer the sound was like the music of some celestial harp.

"Eddie," he murmured coyly.

There was a silence.

"Well, hadn't we better be getting along, Eddie?" said the girl.

Constable Plimmer gulped.

"*I* know you never took no money," he said.

"Thank you, Eddie."

There was a sound of hurried footsteps. Along the street came trotting a small, spectacled figure.

"Officer!" he cried. "Officer!"

It was the little man of the flat, the husband of the sharp-faced woman, the insignificant individual to whom, when in conversation with Ellen, the sharp-faced woman—with unconscious humor—alluded as "the master." He was very warm and very nervous.

Constable Plimmer, sinking the human being in him, resumed his official woodenness.

"Sir?" he said.

"Officer, there has been a—a—a slight mistake. My wife and I have—ah—talked it over—talked it over—and—er—we have come to the conclusion that there has been a slight mistake. We—ah—circumstances have arisen which make it clear that—er—Ellen did not take the money. In short, we—er—wish to withdraw the charge."

He turned and pattered away. Constable Plimmer regarded him with amazement. This thing had come to him with all the force of unexpectedness. To him it was like the curtain of one of those melodramas that, as a boy, he had been wont to frequent down Stoke Newington way, before he had become a member of the force and put off childish things. There was always a point in those dramas where somebody, without warning, popped up and settled everything with a word.

But Ellen, more familiar with the circumstances, was able to trace the chain of events that had led up to the dramatic intervention; and there was a kindly and understanding light in her eyes as she watched the little man disappear.

"Well, you never can tell!" she said. "Fancy him having the pluck! Of course, I knew it was him that had taken the money all the time, but what could you do when he denied it? And no sooner had we gone than he up and tells her that it was him. I wonder what made him do it?"

Constable Plimmer could answer that. He had seen the thing happen often in moving-picture dramas.

"Remorse," he said. "Havin' made a false accusation, his conscience give him what for, and he confessed. That's what it was—remorse."

Ellen sighed.

"Poor little bloke!" she said pitifully. "I'll bet it ain't nothing to the remorse he's going to have from now on, with her having this against him. She's a hard woman, she is. 'Talked it over,' he said they did. I believe him. And they'll talk it over a lot more before he hears the last of it. There's an awful lot of unhappiness knocking around, Eddie. There's an awful lot of fellows go getting married to the wrong woman, ain't there, Eddie?"

Constable Plimmer looked up the street and down the street.. There was nobody in sight. He drew Ellen to him, and blushingly enveloped her with a vast blue arm.

"But," he argued, "on the other hand, there's one or two go getting married to the right one, ain't there? How would it be if I was to pop round and see about putting up them banns when I come off duty to-night?"

"When a man says he's willin'," said Mr. Barkis, "it's as much as to say, that man's a-waitin' for an answer."—*Charles Dickens.*

One Way of Wooing

SHE is a woman, therefore may be wooed;
She is a woman, therefore may be won.—*William Shakespeare.*

By Proxy

Rosalind: Come, woo me, woo me; for now I am in holiday humor, and like enough to consent. What would you say to me now, and I were your very Rosalind?

Orlando: I would kiss before I spoke.

Rosalind: Nay, you were better speak first, and when you were graveled for lack of matter, you might take occasion to kiss. Very good orators, when they are out, they will spit; and for lovers lacking—God warn us!—matter, the cleanliest shift is to kiss.

Orlando: How if the kiss be denied?

Rosalind: Then she puts you to entreaty, and there begins new matter. But come, ask me what you will, I will grant it.

Orlando: Then love me, Rosalind.

Rosalind: Yes, faith will I, Fridays, and Saturdays and all.

Orlando: And wilt thou have me?

Rosalind: Aye, and twenty such.

Orlando: What sayest thou?

Rosalind: Are you not good?

Orlando: I hope so.

Rosalind: Why, then, can one desire too much of a good thing?'—*William Shakespeare.*

To get thine ends lays bashfulness aside;
Who fears to ask, doth teach to be denied.—*Robert Herrick.*

SHOW me where's a woman won without
The help of one lie which she believes—
That—never mind how things have come to pass,
And let who loves have loved a thousand times—
All the same he now loves her only, loves
Her ever.—*Robert Browning.*

By Letter

ONE day I received a letter from London signed by a young lady blackbird: "I have read your poem," she said to me, "and the admiration which I felt has caused me to form the resolution of offering you my hand and my person:

God has created us for each other. I am like you: I am a white young lady blackbird."

My surprise and my joy may easily be imagined. "A white young lady blackbird!" I said to myself. "Is it really possible? Then I am no longer alone upon the earth!" I hastened to reply to the fair unknown, and I did so in a manner which showed plainly how much her offer was to my mind. I pressed her to come to Paris, or to permit me to fly to her. She replied that she preferred to come herself, because her parents bored her, that she was arranging her affairs and that I should see her soon.

She did indeed come some days later. Oh, joy! she was the prettiest lady blackbird in the world, and she was even whiter than myself!—*Alfred de Musset.*

FROM the desert I come to thee
On a stallion shod with fire;
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand,
And the midnight hears my cry:
I love thee, I love but thee
With a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold.
—*Bayard Taylor.*

THE surest way to hit a woman's heart is to take aim kneeling.—*Douglas Jerrold.*

The Synthetic Lover

Christian: I am of those—I recognize it—who do not know how to talk of love.

Cyrano: *Tiens!* It seems to me, that, if Nature had taken more pains with my shape, I should be one of those who do know how to talk of it.

Christian: Oh, to be able to express things gracefully!

Cyrano: Oh, to be a graceful little figure of a passing mousquetaire!

Christian: Roxane is a precieuse. There is no chance but that I shall be a disillusion to Roxane.

Cyrano: Roxane shall have no disillusions. Tell me, shall we win her heart—we two as one? Will you submit to feel transmitted from my leather doublet into your doublet stitched with silk, the soul I wish to share? Since you fear, left to yourself, to chill her heart, will you consent—and it will take fire, I vouch for it—to contribute your lips to my phrases? Will you complete me, and let me in exchange complete you? We will walk side by side: you in full light, I in your shadow. I will be wit to you; you, to me, shall be good looks.

Christian: (embracing him) Ah, my friend!—*Edmond Rostand.*

On Taming a Shrew

Petruchio: I will attend her here,
And woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail; why then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale;
Say that she frown; I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly washed with dew;
Say she be mute, and will not speak a word;
Then I'll commend her volubility,
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence;
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,
As though she bid me stay with her a week;
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.—*William Shakespeare.*

I'LL woo her as a lion woos his bride.—*John Home.*

"DURING the course of the next week I shall endeavor to propitiate you with gifts. Gifts!" soliloquized Mr. Vince. "That is the secret. Keep sending gifts. If men would only stick to gifts and quarreling, there would be fewer bachelors." —*P. G. Wodehouse.*

COME not cringing to sue me!
Take me with triumph and power;
As a warrior storms a fortress!
I will not shrink or cower.
Come as you came in the desert
Ere we were women and men,
When the tiger passions were in us,
And love as you loved me then.—*W. W. Story.*

Suggestions for the Timid Lover

WHAT endless opportunities books afford to lovers, who perhaps are denied all other meeting places than may be found in the telltale pages of a marked volume. The method is so easy and so unsuspect. You have only to put faint pencil marks against the tenderest passages in your favorite new poet, and lend the volume to Her, and She has only to leave here and there the dropped violet of a timid confirmatory initial, for you to know your fate.—*Richard Le Gallienne.*

TAKE no repulse, whatever she doth say;
For, "get you gone," she doth not mean "away!"
Flatter, and praise, commend, extol their graces;
Though ne'er so black, say they have angels' faces.
That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man
If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.—*William Shakespeare.*

A PRESSING lover seldom wants success
Whilst the respectful, like the Greek, sits down
And wastes a ten years' siege before one town.—*Nicholas Rowe.*

The Silent Attack

ON a day when a woman who passes before you emits light as she walks, you are lost, for you love. You have from that moment but one thing to do: think of her so intently that she will be content to think of you.—*Victor Hugo.*

BRISK confidence still best with woman copes;
Pique her and soothe in turn, soon passion crowns thy hopes.—*Lord Byron.*

A BEAUTY, but over light-headed; a Booby who had fine legs. How these first courted, billed, and cooed, according to nature; then pouted, fretted, grew utterly enraged and blew one another up!—*Thomas Carlyle.*

FOLLOW a shadow, it still flies you,
Seem to fly it, it will pursue.
So court a mistress, she denies you;
Let her alone, she will court you.—*Ben Jonson.*

Love and Pity Are Akin

HER father loved me; oft invited me;
Still questioned me the story of my life,
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I had passed.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days.
This to hear
Would Desdemona seriously incline:
But still the house affairs would draw her thence,
Which even as she could with haste dispatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse: which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
I did consent,
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffered. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs;

She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:
She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished
That heaven had made her such a man; she thanked me,
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
I should but teach him how to tell my story,
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:
She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used.—*William Shakespeare.*

He that will win his dame must do
As love does when he draws his bow;
With one hand thrust the lady from,
And with the other pull her home.—*Samuel Butler.*

To Be Avoided

In a short time he contrived to draw my attention to himself by his extreme impertinence; for he chose to express what he called his admiration of me in terms so open and familiar that he forced me to express my displeasure with equal plainness. But how was I surprised when I found he had the temerity to impute my resentment to doubts of his honor!

"My dear ma'am, you must be a little patient; I assure you I have no bad designs, I have not, upon my word; but really, there is no resolving upon such a thing as matrimony all at once; what with the loss of one's liberty, and what with the ridicule of all one's acquaintance—I assure you, ma'am, you are the first lady who ever made me even demur upon this subject; for, after all, my dear ma'am, marriage is the devil."

"Your opinion, sir," answered I, "of either the married or the single life, can be of no manner of consequence to me."

"Why, really, ma'am, as to you being a little out of sorts, I must own I can't wonder at it; for, to be sure, marriage is all in all with the ladies; but with us gentlemen it's quite another thing! Now only put yourself in my place. Suppose you had such a large acquaintance of gentlemen as I have, and that you had always been used to appear a little—a little smart among them—why now how would you like to let yourself down all at once into a married man?

"I assure you, ma'am," added he, "a great many other ladies have been proposed to me, but I never thought twice of any of them—that is, not in a serious way—so you may very well be proud"—offering to take my hand—"for I assure you, nobody is so likely to catch me at last as yourself."—*Fanny Burney.*

A Book Lovers' Tournament

Introducing a new kind of mystery story

In THE FORETASTE *of this issue are announced the title and author of the July anonymous story and the names of the successful entrants in the July* BOOK LOVERS' TOURNAMENT.—*The Editor.*

HOW fully does the style betray the writer? Could you detect the essence of Shakespeare in an obscure passage of his work? Could you read "Dickens" between the lines of a Pickwickian dialogue? Would the felicitous flow of an anonymous extract from a Stevenson romance reveal its author to you?

On the next page you will find a complete story whose title is withheld and whose author is left anonymous. The name of the author is known wherever books are circulated.

Can you identify the author and the story?

* * * * *

IF you can detect the title of this month's anonymous story and the name of its author, send us a letter of not more than one thousand words, and in it tell us:

1. *The title of the story.*
2. *The full name of the story's author.*
3. *Your reason for attributing the story to the author you have named.*
4. *How you discovered the title of the story.*
5. *What you think of the story.*

* * * * *

TO the writer of the most interesting letter composed as above outlined and correctly naming the title and author of the anonymous story appearing in this issue of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, the editors will pay fifty dollars. To each of the writers of the ten letters next in order of excellence the editors will pay five dollars.

* * * * *

LETTERS will be judged on the basis of literary merit and authenticated accuracy. In order to receive consideration, each letter must show that its writer has definite knowledge of the anonymous story's title and author. This knowledge may come of standing familiarity with the works of the author under consideration, or may be derived from inquiry, research, and comparison. But each letter must clearly explain on what authority its writer bases his conclusion. Letters which exhibit evidence of guesswork will not receive consideration.

* * * * *

ALL letters competing in the Book Lovers' Tournament of this issue must be received by the Editor of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, at 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City, on or before September 10th, 1926.

The names of successful contestants will be published in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE for the month of November, 1926.

There will be another anonymous story in the October issue.

Who Wrote This Story?

What Is Its Title?

IT makes me melancholy to see how like fools some very sensible people act in the matter of choosing wives. They perplex their judgments by a most undue attention to little niceties of personal appearance, habits, disposition, and other trifles which concern nobody but the lady herself. An unhappy gentleman resolving to wed nothing short of perfection keeps his heart and hand till both get so old and withered that no tolerable woman will accept them. Now, this is the very height of absurdity. A kind of Providence has so skillfully adapted sex to sex and the mass of individuals to each other that, with certain obvious exceptions, any male and female may be moderately happy in the married state. The true rule is to ascertain that the match is fundamentally a good one, and then to take it for granted that all minor objections, should there be such, will vanish if you let them alone. Only put yourself beyond hazard as to the real basis of matrimonial bliss, and it is scarcely to be imagined what miracles in the way of reconciling smaller incongruities connubial love will effect.

For my own part, I freely confess that in my bachelorship I was precisely such an over-curious simpleton as I now advise the reader not to be. My early habits had gifted me with a feminine sensibility and too exquisite refinement. I was the accomplished graduate of a dry-goods store where by dint of ministering to the whims of the fine ladies, and suiting silken hose to delicate limbs, and handling satins, ribbons, chintzes, calicoes, tapes, gauze and cambric needles, I grew up a very ladylike sort of a gentleman. It is not assuming too much to affirm that the ladies themselves were hardly so ladylike as Thomas Bullfrog. So painfully acute was my sense of female imperfection, and such varied excellence did I require in the woman whom I could love, that there was an awful risk of my getting no wife at all or of being driven to perpetrate matrimony with my own image in the looking-glass. Besides the fundamental principle already hinted at, I demanded the fresh bloom of youth, pearly teeth, glossy ringlets, and the whole list of lovely items, with the utmost delicacy of habits and sentiments, a silken texture of mind, and, above all, a virgin heart. In a word, if a young angel just from Paradise, yet dressed in earthly fashion, had come

and offered me her hand, it is by no means certain that I should have taken it. There was every chance of my becoming a most miserable old bachelor, when by the best luck in the world I made a journey into another State, and was smitten by and smote again, and wooed, won and married the present Mrs. Bullfrog, all in the space of a fortnight. Owing to these extempore measures, I not only gave my bride credit for certain perfections which have not as yet come to light, but also overlooked a few trifling defects, which, however, glimmered on my perception long before the close of the honeymoon. Yet, as there was no mistake about the fundamental principle aforesaid, I soon learned, as will be seen, to estimate Mrs. Bullfrog's deficiencies and superfluities at exactly their proper value.

The same morning that Mrs. Bullfrog and I came together as a unit we took two seats in the stage-coach and began our journey toward my place of business. There being no other passengers, we were as much alone and as free to give vent to our raptures as if I had hired a hack for the matrimonial jaunt. My bride looked charming in a green silk calash and riding-habit of pelisse cloth; and whenever her red lips parted with a smile, each tooth appeared like an inestimable pearl. Such was my passionate warmth that—we had rattled out of the village, gentle reader, and were lonely as Adam and Eve in Paradise—I plead guilty to no less freedom than a kiss. The gentle eye of Mrs. Bullfrog scarcely rebuked me for the profanation. Emboldened by her indulgence, I threw back the calash from her polished brow and suffered my fingers, white and delicate as her own, to stray among those dark and glossy curls which realized my daydreams of rich hair.

"My love," said Mrs. Bullfrog, tenderly, "you will disarrange my curls."

"Oh, no, my sweet Laura," replied I, still playing with the glossy black ringlets. "Even your fair hand could not manage a curl more delicately than mine. I propose myself the pleasure of doing up your hair in papers every evening at the same time with my own."

"Mr. Bullfrog," repeated she, "you must not disarrange my curls."

This was spoken in a more decided tone than I had happened to hear until then from my gentlest of all gentle brides. At the same time she put up her hand and took mine prisoner, but merely drew it away from the forbidden ringlet, and then immediately released it. Now, I am a fidgety little man and always love to have something in my fingers; so that, being debarred from my wife's curls, I looked about me for any other plaything. On the front seat of the coach there was one of those small baskets in which traveling ladies who are too delicate to appear at a public table generally carry a supply of gingerbread, biscuits and cheese, cold ham, and other light refreshments, merely to sustain nature to the journey's end. Such airy diet will sometimes keep them in pretty good flesh for a week together. Laying hold of this same little basket, I thrust my hand under the newspaper with which it was carefully covered.

"What's this, my dear?" cried I, for the black neck of a bottle had popped out of the basket.

"A bottle of Kalydor, Mr. Bullfrog," said my wife, coolly taking the basket from my hands and replacing it on the front seat.

There was no possibility of doubting my wife's word, but I never knew genuine Kalydor such as I use for my own complexion to smell so much like cherry-brandy. I was about to express my fears that the lotion would injure her skin, when an accident occurred which threatened more than a skin-deep injury. Our Jehu had carelessly driven over a heap of gravel and fairly cap-

sized the coach, with the wheels in the air and our heels where our heads should have been. What became of my wits I cannot imagine: they have always had a perverse trick of deserting me just when they were most needed; but so it chanced that in the confusion of our overthrow I quite forgot that there was a Mrs. Bullfrog in the world. Like many men's wives, the good lady served her husband as a stepping-stone. I had scrambled out of the coach and was instinctively settling my cravat, when somebody brushed roughly by me and I heard a smart whack upon the coachman's ear.

"Take that, you villain!" cried a strange, hoarse voice. "You have ruined me, you blackguard! I shall never be the woman I have been."

And then came a second thwack, aimed at the driver's other ear, but which missed it and hit him on the nose, causing a terrible effusion of blood. Now, who or what fearful apparition was inflicting this punishment on the poor fellow remained an impenetrable mystery to me. The blows were given by a person of grisly aspect with a head almost bald and sunken cheeks, apparently of the feminine gender, though hardly to be classed in the gentler sex. There being no teeth to modulate the voice, it had a mumbled fierceness—not passionate, but stern—which absolutely made me quiver like calves'-foot jelly. Who could the phantom be? The most awful circumstance of the affair is yet to be told, for this ogre—or whatever it was—had a riding-habit like Mrs. Bullfrog's, and also a green silk calash dangling down her back by the strings. In my terror and turmoil of mind I could imagine nothing less than that the Old Nick at the moment of our overturn had annihilated my wife and jumped into her petticoats. This idea seemed the more probable since I could nowhere perceive Mrs. Bullfrog alive, nor, though I looked very sharp about the coach, could I detect any traces of that beloved woman's dead body. There would have been a comfort in giving her a Christian burial.

"Come, sir! Bestir yourself! Help this rascal to set up the coach," said the hobgoblin to me; then, with a terrific screech to three countrymen at a distance, "Here, you fellows! Ain't you ashamed to stand off when a poor woman is in distress?"

The countrymen, instead of fleeing for their lives, came running at full speed, and laid hold of the topsy-turvy coach. I also, though a small-sized man, went to work like a son of Anak. The coachman, too, with the blood still streaming from his nose, tugged and toiled most manfully, dreading, doubtless, that the next blow might break his head. And yet, bemauled as the poor fellow had been, he seemed to glance at me with an eye of pity, as if my case were more deplorable than his. But I cherished a hope that all would turn out a dream, and seized the opportunity, as we raised the coach, to jam two of my fingers under the wheel, trusting that the pain would awaken me.

"Why, here we are all to rights again!" exclaimed a sweet voice, behind. "Thank you for your assistance, gentlemen. My dear Mr. Bullfrog, how you perspire! Do let me wipe your face. Don't take this little accident too much to heart, good driver. We ought to be thankful that none of our necks are broken!"

"We might have spared one neck out of the three," muttered the driver, rubbing his ear and pulling his nose, to ascertain whether he had been cuffed or not. "Why, the woman's a witch!"

I fear that the reader will not believe, yet it is positively a fact, that there stood Mrs. Bullfrog with her glossy ringlets curling on her brow and two rows of Orient pearls gleaming between her parted lips, which wore a most angelic smile. She had regained her

riding-habit and calash from the grisly phantom, and was in all respects the lovely woman who had been sitting by my side at the instant of our overturn. How she had happened to disappear, and who had supplied her place, and whence she did now return, were problems too knotty for me to solve. There stood my wife: that was the one thing certain among a heap of mysteries. Nothing remained but to help her into the coach and plod on through the journey of the day and the journey of life as comfortably as we could. As the driver closed the door upon us I heard him whisper to the three countrymen.

"How do you suppose a fellow feels shut up in the cage with a she-tiger?"

Of course this query could have no reference to my situation; yet, unreasonable as it may appear, I confess that my feelings were not altogether so ecstatic as when I first called Mrs. Bullfrog mine. True, she was a sweet woman and an angel of a wife; but what if a gorgon should return amid the transports of our connubial bliss and take the angel's place! I recollected the tale of a fairy who half the time was a beautiful woman and half the time a hideous monster. Had I taken that very fairy to be the wife of my bosom? While such whims and chimeras were flitting across my fancy I began to look askance at Mrs. Bullfrog, almost expecting that the transformation would be wrought before my eyes.

To divert my mind I took up the newspaper which had covered the little basket of refreshments, and which now lay at the bottom of the coach blushing with a deep-red stain and emitting a potent spirituous fume from the contents of the broken bottle of Kalydor. The paper was two or three years old, but contained an article of several columns in which I soon grew wonderfully interested. It was the report of a trial for breach of promise of marriage, giving the testimony in full, with fervid extracts from both the gentleman's and lady's amatory correspondence. The deserted damsel had personally appeared in court, and had borne energetic evidence to her lover's perfidy and the strength of her blighted affections. On the defendant's part, there had been an attempt, though insufficiently sustained, to blast the plaintiff's character, and a plea, in mitigation of damages, on account of her unamiable temper. A horrible idea was suggested by the lady's name.

"Madam," said I, holding the newspaper before Mrs. Bullfrog's eyes—and, though a small, delicate and thin-visaged man, I feel assured that I looked very terrific—"Madam," repeated I, through my shut teeth, "were you the plaintiff in this case?"

"Oh, my dear Mr. Bullfrog!" replied my wife, sweetly. "I thought all the world knew that."

"Horror! horror!" exclaimed I, sinking back on the seat.

Covering my face with both hands, I emitted a deep and deathlike groan, as if my tormented soul were rending me asunder. I, the most exquisitely fastidious of men, and whose wife was to have been the most delicate and refined of women, with all the fresh dewdrops glittering on her virgin rosebud of a heart! I thought of the glossy ringlets and pearly teeth, I thought of the Kalydor, I thought of the coachman's bruised ear and bloody nose, I thought of the tender love secrets which she had whispered to the judge and jury, and a thousand tittering auditors, and gave another groan.

"Mr. Bullfrog!" said my wife.

As I made no reply, she gently took my hands within her own, removed them from my face and fixed her eyes steadfastly on mine.

"Mr. Bullfrog," said she, not unkindly, yet with all the decision of her

strong character, "let me advise you to overcome this foolish weakness and prove yourself to the best of your ability as good a husband as I will be a wife. You have discovered, perhaps, some little imperfections in your bride. Well, what did you expect? Women are not angels; if they were, they would go to heaven for husbands—or, at least, be more difficult in their choice on earth."

"But why conceal those imperfections?" interposed I, tremulously.

"Now, my love, are you not a most unreasonable little man?" said Mrs. Bullfrog, patting me on the cheek. "Ought a woman to disclose her frailties earlier than the wedding day? Few husbands, I assure you, make the discovery in such good season, and still fewer complain that these trifles are concealed too long. Well, what a strange man you are! Poh! you are joking."

"But the suit for breach of promise!" groaned I.

"Ah! and is that the rub?" exclaimed my wife. "Is it possible that you view that affair in an objectionable light? Mr. Bullfrog, I never could have dreamed it. Is it an objection that I have triumphantly defended myself against a slander and vindicated my purity in a court of justice? Or do you complain because your wife has shown the proper spirit of a woman, and punished the villain who trifled with her affections?"

"But," persisted I, shrinking into a corner of the coach, however, for I did not know precisely how much contradiction the proper spirit of a woman would endure—"but, my love, would it not have been more dignified to treat the villain with the silent contempt he merited?"

"That is all very well, Mr. Bullfrog," said my wife, slyly, "but in that case where would have been the five thousand dollars which are to stock your dry-goods store?"

"Mrs. Bullfrog, upon your honor," demanded I, as if my life hung upon her words, "is there no mistake about those five thousand dollars?"

"Upon my word of honor, there is none," replied she. "The jury gave me every cent the rascal had, and I have kept it all for my dear Bullfrog."

"Then, thou dear woman," cried I, with an overwhelming gush of tenderness, "let me fold thee to my heart! The basis of matrimonial bliss is secure, and all thy little defects and frailties are forgiven. Nay, since the result has been so fortunate, I rejoice at the wrongs which drove thee to this blessed lawsuit, happy Bullfrog that I am!"

SHE is regularly bought, and you may take your oath *he* is as regularly sold. —*Charles Dickens.*

OF all dissolvements, the most active is love.—*Soulary.*

SECRECY, quoth-a! 'Fore George, I wonder you a'n't ashamed to mention such a word when you talk of telling it to a woman.—*Fanny Burney.*

THERE swims no goose so gray but soon or late
She finds some honest gander for her mate.—*Alexander Pope.*

CHOOSE rather to leave your children well instructed than rich. For the hopes of the wise are better than the riches of the ignorant.—*Epictetus.*

Summer Smiles

By Cora Smith Gould

I KNOW the nook that hides a rose
Atop the hill, where soft wind blows;
A rose that's very wild and shy,
But smiles at me as I pass by.

I joy to watch a nest that swings,
Holding a bird with folded wings;
Whene'er I stay too long a while,
Her mate will scold and make me smile.

I chance to know where rabbits play,
By the bend of the golden hay.
To join them would be keen delight,
But, shy of smiles, they whisk from sight.

I climb with Mona up the rise;
A collie she, with loving eyes.
She leads me to the great oak tree,
That seems to smile and beckon me.

I rove where perfumes scent the air.
The woodland spirits call me there,
For communion 'neath the sky;
Where smiling clouds go drifting by.

I know a boy more precious far
Than all the other blessings are;
And when he flashes smiles at me,
My smiles flash back in ecstasy.

The Foretaste

IN AINSLEE'S FOR OCTOBER

JUST as the defendant begins to repeat the oath, she rushes forward, sweeps away his outstretched hand, and seizes the Bible. She struggles with herself to get control of her voice, and this time she succeeds. She says slowly, earnestly, and clearly, as she looks the judge in the face: "I wish to withdraw the suit. He is the father of the child. I am still fond of him. I don't wish him to swear falsely."

She stands erect and resolute, facing the judge's table, all the while looking the judge square in the face. While the judge is looking at her a great change comes over him. All the ennui and displeasure in his face vanish, and the large, rough-hewn visage becomes beautiful with the most beautiful emotion. "Ah, see!" he thinks. "Ah, see! Such is the mettle of my people. I shall not be vexed with them when there is so much love and godliness in one of the humblest."

Suddenly the judge feels his eyes fill up with tears; then he pulls himself together, almost ashamed, and casts a hasty glance about him. He sees that the clerks and bailiffs and the whole long row of jurymen are leaning forward and looking at the girl who stands before the judge's table with the Bible hugged close to her. And he sees a light in their faces, as though they had seen something very beautiful, which had made them happy all the way into their souls.

From "The Girl From the Marsh Croft," by Selma Lagerlöf.

SLOWLY, softly, they mounted the stairs to his room, and with almost an obeisance he entered and drew her in. A bank of cloud raced to the east and a full moon thrust a sharp sword of light upon them. Silence lay over all Pennyfields. With a birdlike movement she looked up at him—her face alight, her tiny hands upon his coat—clinging, wondering, trusting. He took her hand and kissed it; repeated the kiss upon her cheek and lip and little bosom, twining his fingers in her hair. Docilely, and echoing the smile of his lemon lips in a way that thrilled him almost to laughter, she returned his kisses, impetuously, gladly.

He clasped the nestling to him. Bruised, tearful, with the love of life almost thrashed out of her, she had fluttered to him out of the evil night.

From "The Chink and the Child," by Thomas Burke.

* * *

THE Duchessa crumbled the bread, and began to sprinkle the ground with it; and in an instant she was the center of a cloud of birds. Peter was at liberty to watch her, to admire the swift grace of her motions, their suggestion of delicate strength, of joy in things physical, and the lithe elasticity of her figure, against the background of satiny lawn, and the farther vistas of lofty, sunlit trees. She was dressed in white, as always—a frock of I know not what supple fabric, that looked as if you might have passed it through your ring, and fell in multitudes of

small, soft creases. Two big, red roses drooped from her bodice. She wore a garden hat of white straw, with a big, daring, rose-red bow, under which the dense meshes of her hair, warmly dark, dimly bright, shimmered in a blur of brownish gold.

"What vigor, what verve, what health," thought Peter, watching her; "what clean, clear, fragrant health!" And he had, no doubt, his emotions.

From "The Cardinal's Snuff-Box," by Henry Harland.

* * *

THE crisis of Delmar's life was this. He was thirty-five. He had married before he actually took holy orders, at the age of twenty-two, a girl with a little money of her own, with whom he was very much in love. The girl was five years older than he was. She had left him and her son Jack just before he got his preferment: presumably with another man, but of that Delmar was not sure. His pride forbade him to track her in any way. The idea of keeping an unwilling woman, or of prying into her affairs, disgusted his nature.

At first he had been very lonely. But a friend of his, a writer, a little deformed man with an enormous head, came to stay with him, and the visit was prolonged. The little deformed man, whose name was Ingleton, gradually came to live with Delmar. Ingleton had a sister, Ruth, who was a governess. In her holidays she naturally came to stay with her brother and his friend. Delmar's friendship with her ripened into love.

His feeling for Ruth Ingleton was as different from the feeling he had had for his wife, as a boy's blaze of passion for a woman he has been allowed to kiss always is from a man's love for a woman who is responsive to his deeper needs. He was man enough to realize this, and boy enough to overlook his position and the law. What was the spirit of marriage, he asked himself; and swiftly answered: that two people who loved each other should live together and let the joy each found in the other shine out on the world.

From "Men and Brothers," by Hugh de Sèlincourt.

* * *

PASSIONATELY resentful she was.

"You make a fool of yourself, but is that any reason why you should make a fool of me? You come sneaking here, and then you hide away. It's mean and disgusting, it is. And I have had so much unkindness from you. Why do you behave in this absurd manner?"

"But I thought"—so bewildered was Martin—"I thought I was in the way, that you didn't want me. And you didn't."

Athalie's contempt was a revelation. "No, then, I didn't want you, and I don't want you."

"You married me. After all, I'm your husband," he maintained sturdily.

"Heaven help you for a fool! Such a miserable thing you have made of our lives. Always you've had your own way, but it was never a man's way."

"Listen, Athalie. I came all the way from England for you."

"Yes, why?"

"I just wanted to see you."

"Yes, but why?"

"I came for more than I can tell you."

"Oh!" She was bitterly impatient. "You think I don't know why, but I know well enough."

"I came, but you drove me away."

Athalie eyed him, at this, as a schoolmistress eyes an idiotic infant.

"Let us go out!" she said petulantly. "Let us go out! Shall we go out?"

From "A Wildgoose Chase," by A. E. Coppard.

* * *

Also in the October issue are stories by Frank Harris, O. Henry, Rudyard Kipling, Henri Murger, and an anony-

mous work of classical rank in the eleventh Book Lovers' Tournament.

TOURNAMENT AWARDS

THE anonymous story in the Book Lovers' Tournament for July was written by Charles Dickens. Its title is "The Old Man's Tale About the Queer Client." It is one of the tales included in "The Pickwick Papers."

Mr. Frank Cooke, of Cincinnati, Ohio, contributed the winning letter reproduced below, and has been awarded the first prize of fifty dollars.

Following the winning letter are extracts from the ten entries judged next in order of excellence. To each of these, prizes of five dollars have been awarded.

* * *

THE WINNING LETTER

Editor, AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE:

The name of the anonymous story which appeared in the July number of AINSLEE'S is "The Old Man's Tale About the Queer Client," and forms part of Chapter 21 of "The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club," by Charles Dickens. His full name was Charles John Huffam Dickens. Before I had finished reading the story I realized that it was not unknown to me, but, at the moment, could not recall the name or the author. Suddenly "The Pickwick Papers" came into my mind, and on consulting a copy of the book at the Public Library I found my memory had not played me false. But even if I had not been familiar with the story I believe I should have recognized it as "Dickens." The description of the Marshalsea in the Boro and of the child's death there could only have come from the pen of one familiar with the prison and its inmates, and was not John Dickens, the author's father, imprisoned there while Charles was yet a boy?

His memories of the streets, and the prison, and its purlieus must have given him a store of literary material upon which to draw through the years of his best activity. As a psychological study the story does not interest me, it being merely an example of Dickens' hatred of avarice—Scrooge and Ralph Nickleby are other illustrations—but as a descriptive narrative it is perfect and one feels that the author knows personally the places he so ably describes. Otherwise the story might be regarded as a sermon on the text "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

Dickens' literary force is due to no great artistic or intellectual quality, but almost entirely to his inordinate gift of observation, his sympathy with the poor, his power over the emotions, and his unsurpassed endowment of human fun. He knew what the people wanted and he told what he knew. His was a mind of the people, ranking generosity before justice, and sympathy before truth. This is what makes his public success such a marvel. Dickens had no artistic ideals worth speaking about. What he wanted was the sympathy of his readers, and he went straight for it through the avenue of the emotions. His creations live and move about us constantly like those of Homer and Shakespeare. Who will ever forget Mr. Micawber and Mrs. Gamp? It must be admitted, however, that his plots are strangely unintelligible, his form insignificant. His novels are enormous stockpots into which is thrown every autobiographical experience, emotion, and anecdote. Perhaps this is the reason why people's interest in Dickens' novels is waning, but as a man and as a representative author of his age he is surely unsurpassed. Many accuse him of exaggeration and caricature in the portraiture of his characters, and for this reason find his books unreadable. Sometimes I am inclined to believe it to be a case of "the rage of Caliban on seeing his face in the glass!" But, truth to tell, do not most of us, sated with Freudian complexes and abstruse psychological problems of the modern novel, turn sometimes with relief to laugh or cry with the characters of Charles Dickens, old and out of date though he may be—with his characters, who never had to worry over sex problems or an inferiority complex—where everything is told simply—as simply as the death of a little child? I know I do.

FRANK COOKE.

Cleveland, Ohio.

* * *

FROM OTHER PRIZE WINNERS

Another characteristic of Dickens is the artificiality of the plot. In the jargon of the modern critic, the plot is not "motivated," the events do not flow inevitably from the respective natures of the characters, the story consists largely of a series of affirmations. This is my greatest quarrel with Dickens, he relies too much upon the element of coincidence, his plots are too elaborate, and too carefully compounded: the characters in the story are often no more than lay figures who are posed here and there by the author. In the present story Heyling is left a large sum of money, he happens along fortuitously

in time to see the old man's son drowning, and so on—the long arm of coincidence appears whenever the author's invention begins to flag. HARRISON C. COFFIN.

Schenectady, N. Y.

* * *

In spite of its manifest shortcomings and a certain air of manufactured horror, the story is poignant, tense, and deeply tragic—a somber interlude in what is one of the most uproariously funny books in the English language. It becomes necessary frequently to lighten the gloom of tragedy by flashes of comedy here and there, lest the reader turn away in weariness of soul from the unrelieved horror. One seldom finds humor so sustained, so brilliant, so infallibly mirth provoking that it must be varied occasionally with a touch of the tragic, lest it cloy. The fine human sympathy and understanding of Charles Dickens and of Laurence Sterne thus alternated humor and pathos; one could wish there were others! J. M. DALLAM.

Philadelphia, Pa.

* * *

Judged by present-day standards, Dickens cannot be considered a great short-story writer. He seldom rises above the anecdote, the sketch, and the mere tale. For that reason, the casual reader, picking up one of his shorter pieces of fiction, is likely to be disappointed. Read in connection with the rambling adventures of the diverting characters in the Pickwick Club, "The Old Man's Tale About the Queer Client" will beguile the reader's fancy rather more than it did the gentleman with the Mosaic studs, who fell asleep during its recital. The reader will soon pass on, however, to the next adventure without any feeling that he has read a masterpiece of the short-story writer's art. It is but a tale to while away an idle hour, and that is all the author intended it to be. VICTOR DYER.

San Francisco, Calif.

* * *

The story, then, is interesting chiefly as an early example. It is, perhaps, not to be classed as a great story and finds no parallel to-day for the simple reason that the conditions no longer exist, and the spirit of revenge so shockingly displayed is altogether intolerable to our better conception of life.

SINCLAIR HAMILTON.

Boston, Mass.

* * *

But now I feel called upon to perform an unpleasant task, one that I have consistently shirked: namely, to analyze my love for all the pen of Dickens has left us. I once heard a young lady, beset by well-meaning relatives who were bent upon pointing out to her in detail the iniquitous character, the unspeakable past, the unpromising future of her lover, interrupt with the illogical explanation: "Yes, I know all that, but I love him just the same." And so I am with Dickens.

MRS. D. V. HARDIN.

Napa, Calif.

* * *

What would be the benefit to society if a new Dickens or Thackeray should arise to hold up a mirror to it? Or is that being done by such men as Sinclair Lewis, and others, some of whom are still in their "salad days?" I should be interested in seeing stories, long or short, on American conditions, stories which were artistically told with an earnestness of moral purpose. Deliver me from stories told to serve an individual's exaggerated or diseased moral consciousness of the defects of himself or others. Rather, let us have the man or woman who sees life clearly and sees it whole, and who then shows it to us in sections small enough for us to grasp. Dickens has done the work he set out to do, but the work he did not dream will go on; his philosophy of sympathy, of Mark Tapleyan cheerfulness, will continue to inspire many of us who do not realize how deeply he has touched our lives. I am glad you printed this story.

AFFA WOOD HUBBELL.

Palmetto, Fla.

* * *

The most profitable way to pursue a course in Dickens is to get yourself sentenced to a year's solitary confinement. Enforced leisure is the time par excellence to read Dickens. On your release your memories will boil down to a vivid acquaintance with certain unforgetable, immortal characters, friends whom you will forever after be glad to drop into the book to meet again. Comic strips, they have been called, these Dickens characters, but they are not the flat projections of Bud Fisher and Milt Gross. They stand before you, full-rounded in all three dimensions.

AMOSE MASSIE.

New York City.

* * *

Brethren, it is a sad, sad, bad story to come from the hand of any writer, and a dispiriting task to endeavor a commentary upon so crude a fiction. As I reread the anonymous contribution and it slowly dawned upon my perspicience that the hand of Dickens was everywhere apparent, I began to wonder upon what foundation was exalted the monumental legend of his undying greatness. Therefore necessity and the lapse of years forced me to struggle anew through "Pickwick Papers."

And I rise in meeting to declare with due solemnity that the struggle has been epic. I have waded deep and labored long. I have read preface, and again in epilogue, an essay by Andrew Lang setting forth the wonders I was to encounter and the delectation that was to ensue. But I am prone to believe with the evangelists that my reward lies beyond the misty veil, for verily I have been discomforted on the road. . . . Can a man be classed among the great when he can write such drivel as this? Does not a candid survey reveal Dickens as a glorified journalist taken to evil ways of inscribing voluminous tomes replete with mawkish sentiment and much tear wringing? Books in which the heroes are all noble, the villains all villain until they reform, and the maidens pure but teary with a persistence that astonishes.

J. A. MURPHY.

Magog, Quebec, Canada.

* * *

I can claim no credit for research work or study to discover the name or author of the story, as I have been familiar with the writings of Dickens from childhood. One of the earliest and most delightful memories that I have takes me back to an old farmhouse in western New York, a full half century ago, to an old-fashioned kitchen, a great open fireplace, a pan of apples and a pitcher of cider on the table, a pair of homemade tallow candles supplementing the firelight, a family circle in front of the blazing logs, all deeply attentive while the mother read aloud from one of the books of Charles Dickens, a set of whose complete works constituted our library. Night after night, and winter after winter, this scene was repeated, no one ever wearying of the splendor of his imagination, the quaintness of his fancy, the charm of his style, the brilliance of his humor, or the power of his pathos.

How wonderfully real the world of Dickens was to us as we listened to the reading while the fire blazed and sparkled and the flames roared up the chimney. How little we cared for the cold or snow outside or the howling of the winter wind while we roamed the summer fields with Little Nell or listened to the music of the waves with Paul and Florence Dombey! What willing tribute of laughter and of tears we gave and how we loved the name of him who had created this mimic world for us.

Ah, well! The voice that read has long been as still as the hand that wrote. The ears of all save one of that family group have long been closed to all earthly sounds; and modern critics tell me that the humor of Dickens is often extravagant and vulgar, that his pathos is strained, hysterical, and unnatural, that his characters are not true to life, that his plots are poorly constructed, and that his style often takes on a lyrical quality which, without being verse, is certainly not good prose. This may all be true, and yet the fact remains that Charles Dickens has been the most widely read and influential author who has written in the English tongue, not even excepting the great William Shakespeare.

W. F. PARISH.

Metlakatla, Alaska.

* * *

As to what I think of the story itself, its hero, viewed from modern standpoints, at least, is a grim and ghastly psychopathic study. Dickens often tried to correct evils by showing their pernicious effects. The debtor's prison, once England's shame, is now only an unhappy memory; but there was once a time when, behind its bars, racked by grief and loneliness, a man's reason might well be overthrown, and unquestionably Heyling emerges from the Marshalsea a madman! For normal men do not callously watch their enemies drown; normal men, however great their wrongs, do not seek to wreak vengeance on an old and broken man. "When God Almighty lays His hand on a man," once said an immortal Missourian, "Thomas H. Benton takes his off." How much saner is this attitude than the fixed idea of revenge which ruled the life of the unhappy Heyling.

MAUD KENNEN WADDOCK.

St. Louis, Mo.

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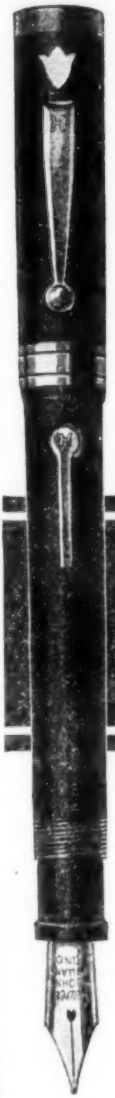

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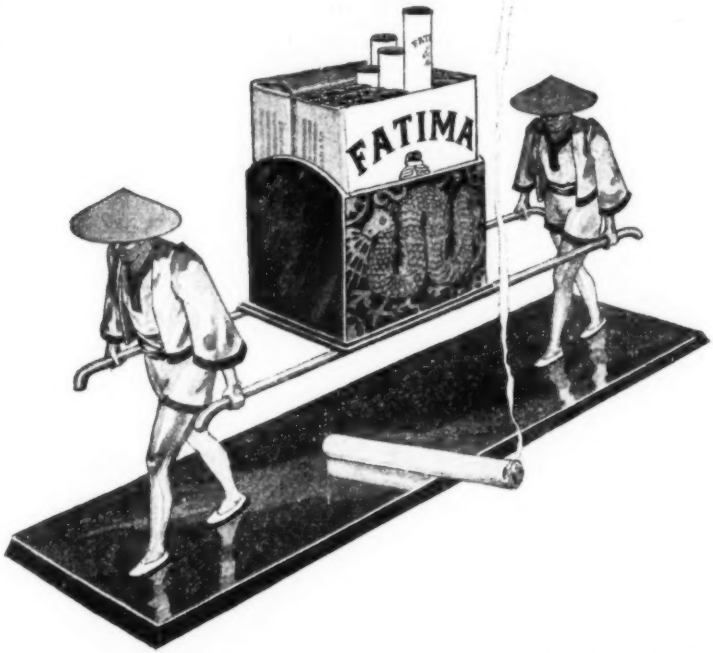

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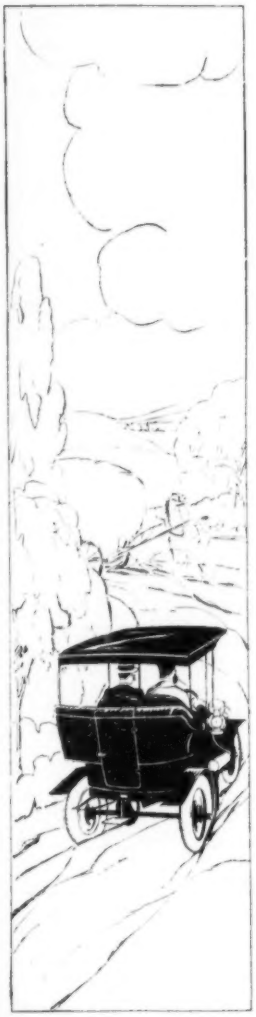

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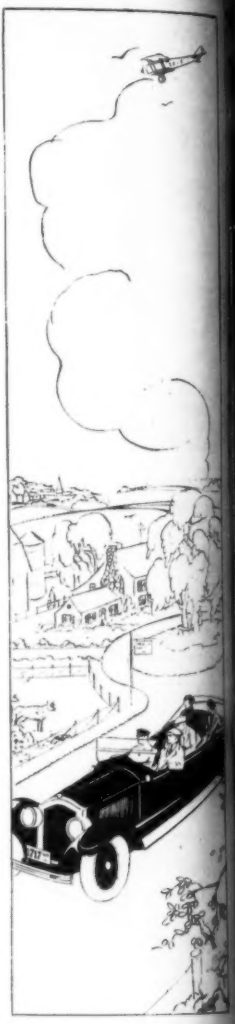

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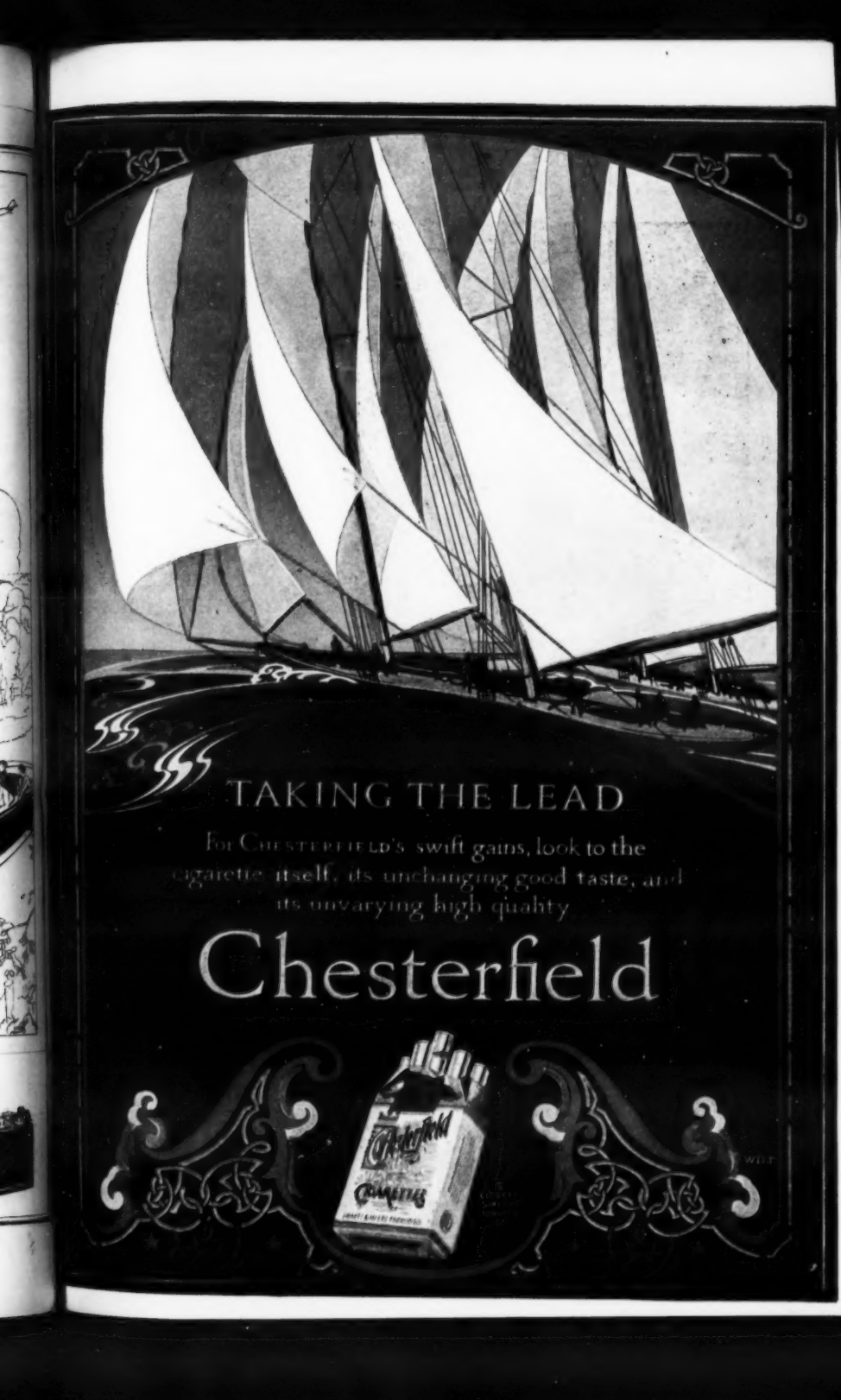
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DANDRUFF?

Bottle Bacilli, the cause of Dandruff. Illustration Reproduced from Hazen's "Diseases of the Skin." C. V. Mosby, Publisher.

Dandruff is a disease difficult to cure, but easy to check.

Unless checked and properly treated it has a persistent tendency to reappear, and often in more virulent form, with possible loss of hair or even total baldness.

The treatment to check dandruff requires constant cleanliness and the use of a suitable antiseptic solution to combat the disease and to heal the scalp.

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—and dandruff simply do not get along together